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BOOSEY'S GUIDE TO THE OPERA.



"The Standard Operas."

A little book which will be found very useful by opera-goers is "The Standard Operas," by George P. Upton. Any one who has ever tried to untangle the mysterious English of the "argument" to the average libretto will appreciate the clear story of the various operas given here. The plot and the chief numbers are given, together with much incidental information about the composer and the first production of his works. In all, sixty-three operas are described, including twelve of Wagner. Donizetti is represented by eight, Verdi and Meyerbeer by six each, Auber, Balfe, Bellini, Gounod, Mozart and Rossini by three each, Weber and Flotow by two each and Beethoven, Bizet, Boieldieu, Boito, Eichberg, Halevy, Lortzing, Ricci, Thomas and Wallace by one opera each. The selection of representative operas has been very well done. The book is so attractively gotten up as to be a credit to the publishers. [Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Co. For sale by Bancroft, price, \$1



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BOOSEY'S
GUIDE TO THE OPERA.

CONTAINING

THE PLOTS AND INCIDENTS OF
ALL THE WELL-KNOWN OPERAS
PERFORMED IN ENGLAND,

WITH SHORT SKETCHES OF THE LIVES OF THE
COMPOSERS, ETC., ETC.

EDITED BY

ALFRED SCOTT GATTY.

PRICE HALF-A-CROWN.

1880.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN placing this small work before the public, the Editor hope to supply a want felt by most opera-goers. But few of us know the Italian language, and still fewer are able to gather the story of an opera from hearing the words sung at the theatre: our only chance, therefore, is to follow every line with the translations of the libretti we buy *en route* to, or in the theatre; but as this keeps the eyes constantly on the book, and but seldom on the stage, the best part of the performance is lost to us. This little volume contains all the well-known operas, arranged in the form of short narratives. Two minutes' reading before the curtain rises will enable the play-goer to know all the leading incidents of the piece in the order that they will occur; thus, instead of having to keep his eyes upon a book, he will be able to devote both eyes and ears exclusively to the stage.

To those who attend the opera as students our little book does not apply, as they are already so well provided for in Messrs. Boosey and Co.'s admirable "Royal Edition."

It is hoped that the short sketches of the lives of the composers, and the footnotes appended to these short analyses, may help towards an intelligent enjoyment of the operas, and may even prove of interest to the general reader.

London, April, 1880.

THE EDITOR.



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AUBER.

DANIEL FRANÇOIS ESPRIT AUBER was born at Caen, in Normandy, on the 29th Jan., 1782, during a visit that his parents made to that town. His father was a printseller in Paris. Wishing his son to devote himself to business, he sent him to London, but Auber, becoming disgusted with a career so utterly adverse to all his tastes, returned to Paris, and there was soon well known as a song or ballad writer. His first attempt in writing for the stage was made in 1813, in the one-act opera entitled "*Le Séjour Militaire*," which was produced at the Theatre Feydeau, and met with but a poor reception. It is impossible, owing to our limited space, to give a complete list of this great composer's works. During his career he was made Commander of the Legion of Honour, and received the decoration of the Belgian Order of Leopold. He died 14th May, 1871.

LES DIAMANTS DE LA COURONNE.*

THE scene of this opera is laid in Portugal, in the year 1777. The Princess Maria Francesca is about ascending the throne, on the death of Guiseppo I, her father, the late King of Portugal, when it is found that the Crown diamonds have been stolen.

The first Act opens with Don Enrico, Marquis di Sandoval, making his way home, after five years' absence, to marry his cousin Diana, daughter of the Count Campo Mayor; he is overtaken by a violent storm in the mountains of Estremadura, and, seeking shelter in the hermitage of St. Hubert, finds himself in

* This opera was produced at L'Opera Comique, Paris, in the year 1841.

the midst of a gang of false coin and diamond makers, who take him prisoner, and are about to kill him, when their commander, in the form of a beautiful woman, called Caterina, the supposed niece of Rebolledo, chief of the coiners, enters and saves his life; they fall desperately in love with one another at first sight. He tells her his errand and how he is pressed for time, and she allows him to depart in safety on his promising to keep the adventure a secret for one year, but acquaints him with the fact that Diana loves Don Sebastiano D'Aveyro, an officer, and that he will not find a very hearty welcome from her on his return. He is about to depart, when Rebolledo announces that they are surrounded by soldiers; the brigands pass out safely, disguised as monks carrying the shrine of St. Hubert, which in reality contains their false diamonds.

In the next act Don Enrico has arrived safely at the castle of Campo Mayor, his mind being much torn between love and duty, not daring to tell Diana the truth; she also being fearful of telling him about Don Sebastiano. The nuptial feast is preparing and the guests arriving, when Sebastiano tells how a carriage has broken down, and the occupants, the Countess Villa Flor and her attendant, are seeking shelter. Enrico is dumbfounded on recognising in these personages Caterina and Rebolledo; he remembers his promise of silence and determines on her deliverance. Count Campo Mayor receives a despatch saying all carriages but his own are to be stopped on the road, and the country scoured for Caterina, she being accused of stealing the Crown jewels. Diana, reading the description of her, recognises her as their guest, the Countess Villa Flor; she is about to give the alarm when Don Enrico stops her, declares his love for her, and they agree, on condition that Don Enrico refuses to sign the marriage bond, to effect the escape of the Countess in Campo Mayor's carriage, which they succeed in doing.

The last Act is laid in the Palace at Lisbon. Count Campo Mayor, Don Enrico, Sebastiano, and Donna Diana are there, to be present at the coronation. They find Rebolledo in high favour, passing off as the Count Antonio Morillas de Fuentes, and he is given an audience with the Queen before them all. While waiting for her Majesty, Rebolledo describes how he was a prisoner doomed to death for counterfeiting coin and diamonds, when a Maid of Honour to the Princess Maria Francesca, came to him and offered him his freedom if he would imitate the Crown diamonds, and, without the ministers' know-

ledge, sell the real ones, giving the proceeds to the Princess, and allow the Maid of Honour to pass off as his niece Caterina. He farther states that, having fulfilled his commission, he has been appointed Superintendent of Police. The Queen enters, and in her he recognizes the Maid of Honour and his supposed niece, Caterina. Count Campo Mayor enters, bringing a decree of the council, which demands that the Queen should marry the Prince of Spain. She tells him that if they will not allow her to select her own husband she will confiscate the property of all the ministers for having allowed the Crown diamonds to be stolen. Diana confesses that she and Enrico assisted Caterina to escape, and the Queen orders both to be imprisoned, but promises pardon should Campo Mayor get the consent of the council to her wish.

In the last scene the Queen is discovered on her throne, crowned with the false diamonds made by Rebolledo, and surrounded by her Court; she tells them that the council have allowed her to select a husband for herself, and, sending for Don Enrico, declares him to be the choice of her heart. He is overwhelmed at finding his Queen to be identical with Caterina, the leader of the coiners in St. Hubert's Hermitage.

FRA DIAVOLO.*

THE scene of this opera is laid near Terracina in Italy. Fra Diavolo, the brigand, passing himself off as the Marquis of San Marco, has been following through Italy Lord Rochburg, an English nobleman, and the Lady Pamela, his wife, having in view the abduction of the lady, who is vain and foolish, and the robbery of their baggage, which is large and valuable.

In the opening scene a band of Carbineers are feasting outside a village Inn, preparatory to starting in chase of Fra Diavolo and his followers. Lorenzo, their captain, is in love with Zerlina, the daughter of Matteo the Inn-keeper, but has been refused

* Was produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, in the year 1830. Mlle. Zare Thalberg caused a great sensation in the year 1875 by her rendering of the character of Zerlina in this Opera. She is daughter of the celebrated pianist; was born at New York, 15th April, 1856, and made her debut at Covent Garden, 10th April, 1875.

by her father as a suitor on account of his poverty, and on the morrow she is about to marry a rich young farmer called Francesco. Lorenzo is about bidding his ladylove farewell when Lord and Lady Rocburg enter, who describe how they have been robbed by the brigands a short distance from the Inn, and his Lordship offers 10,000 francs reward for the recovery of his property. Lorenzo hurries off with his men in pursuit of the robbers.

Fra Diavolo, as the Marquis of San Marco, arrives, much to the chagrin of Lord Rocburg and to the delight of his Lady. He takes a bed at the Inn, and anon two of his companions, Beppo and Giacomo, come and ask for a supper and bed, proclaiming themselves pilgrims; for these the Marquis pays. The last scene of this Act is the re-entrance of Lorenzo, victorious, having encountered the brigands and regained the stolen property. Lady Pamela hands him the 10,000 francs.

The scene of the second Act is Zerlina's bedchamber; she leaves to show Lord Rocburg and his Lady their room, and while absent, the Marquis enters her room with his two companions, intent upon plundering the English Lord. Hearing Zerlina returning, they hide in a cupboard. She commences her night toilet and, being tired, falls asleep over her prayers; the three brigands then creep out, and Beppo is about to stab Zerlina, but is deterred by her murmuring the Virgin's name in her sleep; he is about a second time to plunge the dagger into her when a loud knocking and shouting is heard outside; the robbers again hide in the cupboard, and Zerlina, opening her window, finds that her lover Lorenzo is without with his companions. She throws him the key of the house and he enters; she then goes out to get refreshments for him and his followers, leaving him and Lord Rocburg, who has been disturbed in his slumbers, in her room. They hear a noise in the cupboard and are about to open the door when out steps the Marquis, who tells them that he had clandestine appointments with both Lady Pamela and Zerlina. Lorenzo, in despair at Zerlina's implied unfaithfulness, arranges to meet the Marquis the following morning at seven in mortal combat: on this Lady Pamela and Zerlina appear, who are at a loss to understand the situation, neither of them being in any way concerned in the presence of the Marquis.

The last Act opens with Fra Diavolo, as the Marquis, explaining how he has planted an ambush for Lorenzo, and writing

instructions on a piece of paper for Beppo and Giacomo, which he places in the hollow trunk of a tree, and leaves. Beppo and Giacomo find the paper, which tells them that as soon as Lorenzo is murdered, the Carbineers sent off on the wrong scent, and the people of the Inn gone to the wedding feast, they are to ring the Hermitage bell and he will come and seize Lady Pamela and the booty. Hearing steps approach they retire and the villagers assemble for the wedding feast. Matteo is about to join the hands of Zerlina and Francesco when she breaks away and, running to Lorenzo, begs him to save her and to tell her why he shuns her. He refuses: on this Beppo and Giacomo make fun of her, describing the scene in the bedroom, and how she said certain things to herself. Zerlina says she does not know how they obtained their knowledge, and begs Lorenzo to find out. He orders the soldiers to seize them, and on Giacomo is found the paper containing Fra Diavolo's instructions. Acting under Lorenzo's orders, all hide except Beppo, who is made to act as decoy, the Hermitage bell is rung, and Fra Diavolo enters, thinking the coast is clear; but he is immediately surrounded, and Lorenzo, having won the reward offered for his head, is able to come forward and be accepted as the suitor of Zerlina.

MASANIELLO.*

(LA MUTA DI PORTICI.)

THE scene is laid at Naples, about 1647, A.D. Alphonso, the son of the Spanish Viceroy, is about to be married to Elvira, a Spanish lady. He has previously betrayed a young girl, Fenella, the sister of Masaniello, and who still retains some hold on his affections. Fenella has been imprisoned by his father to keep her out of the way of Alphonso. The nuptial procession of Elvira and Alphonso is interrupted by Fenella, who is dumb,

* This Opera, under the title "*La Muette de Portici*," was first produced in Paris in the year 1828. The plot is founded on an actual historical incident which took place at Naples in the year 1647, when a sailor named Thomas Aniello stirred up an insurrection against the Spanish rule. It was at first successful, but the leader was eventually murdered.

and who, having escaped from her guards, appeals in dumb show to Elvira for mercy and protection. She promises to help her and tell her case to the Prince. The wedding takes place. Fenella witnesses it. Elvira brings Alphonso to her and asks him to release Fenella; she then learns that Alphonso has betrayed the fisherman's sister. Fenella flies through the crowd, and the first Act ends with this denouement.

Masaniello, a fisherman, is the leader of the discontents at the tyranny of Alphonso's father. He hears from his sister that she has been betrayed by a Spaniard (she will not divulge his name), and this only inflames him more against those in power. He summons his friends, and they meditate rebellion. Elvira forgives her husband, and with his consent sends for Fenella to take care of her and be kind to her. She is in the market-place. The soldiers advance to seize her and take her to the Palace. The fishermen, headed by Masaniello, rise and interfere, and the town is pillaged by the peasants. Alphonso and Elvira have to fly. They go to Masaniello's cottage and appeal to Fenella to save them. She at first is inclined for vengeance, and threatens to wake the sleepy fishermen, but at length pity prevails in her, she persuades Masaniello to help them, and, in spite of the threats of his friends, he sends them in a boat to the castle which Alphonso's father has fled to for safety.

Masaniello becomes master of Naples, but there are conspirators in his camp, Pietro and others, who do not forgive his kindness to Alphonso. They half poison him when established in the Viceroy's palace, and Fenella only just rouses him in time for him to lead his friends against the troops which, led by Alphonso, now seek to recapture the town. Masaniello saves the life of Elvira, in the battle which ensues, from the mad populace, who then turn upon him in anger and kill their noble leader. Alphonso then wins the day, after having in vain tried to rescue Masaniello from his mad friends. Fenella hears the news, and joining the hands of Alphonso and Elvira, rushes to the battlements and throws herself headlong from them, so ending her own life.

BEETHOVEN.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN.—There appears to have been some differences of opinion among biographers as to the parentage, and date of birth of this Prince of Musicians, but it is now pretty well established that he was a son of one Johann Von Beethoven, a tenor singer in the Chapel of the Elector at Cologne, and grandson of Ludwig Van Beethoven, singer, and afterwards Master of the same chapel. He was born at Bonn on the Rhine on the 16th December, 1772, and commenced at the early age of five to learn music under his father. His first regular musical instructor, however, was Vander Eden, organist to the Court, but he, dying in 1782, was succeeded by Neefe, who continued the instruction of Beethoven. On the 18th December, 1792, his father died, and Beethoven was sent by the Elector of Cologne to finish his musical education under the then celebrated Joseph Haydn, but on the latter's departure for England two years afterwards, he was placed under the care of the learned Albrechtsberger. Beethoven never married, though his most intimate friend, Dr. Wegeler, says of him, that he was always in love. During the latter years of his life he was stone deaf, and dying of dropsy on the 26th March, 1826, at Vienna, was buried in the cemetery of Währing, near that city.

FIDELIO.*

THE scene of this Opera is one of the State prisons of Spain. Pizarro, Governor of the prison, has unjustly incarcerated Florestan Fernando, against whom he has the most inveterate hatred. Leonora, his wife, adopting male attire and taking the name of Fidelio, gets taken into the service of Rocco, head gaoler of the prison. The better to ingratiate herself, she makes love to Marcellina, the gaoler's daughter, much to the chagrin

* This Opera was first produced at Vienna in the autumn of the year 1805.

of Jacquino, Rocco's assistant, who is in love with Marcellina. Marcellina but too soon forgets her old love for the new, and her father determines to ask Pizarro's consent to make Fidelio his assistant gaoler and son-in-law. Pizarro receives a missive from the Minister to say that he intends making a surprise-visit to the prison, as he hears that many persons are being unjustly kept incarcerated. Pizarro, acting on the old saying "Dead men tell no tales," determines to murder Florestan, and having given consent to Fidelio acting as under-gaoler and to his marriage with Marcellina, he orders Rocco to prepare a grave for Florestan. On the King's birthday Fidelio begs Rocco to let the prisoners walk for a short time in the prison garden, in the hopes of seeing her husband among them, but he does not appear. Pizarro is very angry, and orders the prisoners back to their cells, but forgives Rocco and Fidelio on their going to dig the grave.

In the second Act Florestan is discovered in his dungeon, After bewailing his wretched fate he falls asleep exhausted. Rocco and Fidelio enter with spade and mattock to dig his grave; while they are at work Florestan awakes, and on his speaking to Rocco, Fidelio, or Leonora, recognizes her husband, but has to restrain herself: anon Pizarro enters, wrapt in a cloak and armed with a dagger. Ordering Fidelio to leave, he is about to stab Florestan, when Fidelio rushes in between them and, covering Pizarro with a pistol, bids him defiance. At this moment a blast of trumpets announces the arrival of the Minister, and Pizarro has to leave to attend to him. The Minister orders all the prisoners to be released, and bids Leonora with her own hands to set her husband at liberty, promising to visit Pizarro's treacherous behaviour as it deserves.

BELLINI.

VINCENZO BELLINI was born 3rd of Nov., 1802, at Catania, a town in Sicily; he was son and grandson of musicians of small repute. In 1819 he was admitted to the conservatory of music at Naples. He studied counterpoint under Tritto and Zingarelli. His first opera, "Adelson e Salvina," was produced in 1824 at the small theatre attached to the Royal College of Music. His next work was "Bianca e Fernando," which was produced at the Theatre S. Carlo on the 30th of June, 1826. In 1827 his "Pirata" was performed at Milan, in which Rubini, the great tenor, took the principal rôle. This was followed in 1828 by "La Straniera," Mme. Meric Lalande and Tamburini both taking part in it, and, no doubt, greatly assisting in the success which it had. In 1832 he wrote "Beatrice di Tenda," (for more see notes pp. 9, 10, and 11). Bellini died at Paris, from some internal disorder, on the 24th of September, 1835.

NORMA.*

THE scene opens at night in a sacred forest of the Druids and Temple of Irminsul in Gaul. Norma, the daughter of the Archdruid Orovero, with much pomp cuts the sacred mistletoe and prophecies the downfall of Rome. The district is under the government of Pollio, a Roman pro-consul, the Roman armies having overrun the country. Unknown to anyone but her friend Clotilda, Norma has been untrue to her vows, and is the mother of two children, of whom Pollio is the father. But Pollio transfers his affections to another young priestess, Adalgisa, who returns his love and is under a promise to fly with him to Rome. She tells her story in confidence to Norma, who thereupon discovers Pollio's faithlessness, and the first Act closes with a scene between her, Adalgisa, and Pollio, in which Norma threatens him with her vengeance.

* Was composed at Milan in the year 1831, and on its first production Mme. Malibran assisted in the performance.

Distracted with grief and rage, Norma is on the point of murdering her two children, but her mother's instinct prevails, and she seeks consolation from Adalgisa. The latter endeavours to induce Pollio to return to his first love, Norma, but he is infatuated, and will have nothing but the new object of his affection. Norma summons the Druids to arms, and suddenly Pollio is brought in by the Gauls, having been found lurking in the temple devoted to the priestesses. The Gauls demand his life as the victim for the altar before going to war. Norma hesitates, and offers him his freedom if he promises to renounce Adalgisa. This he will not do. She threatens Adalgisa's life with as little success, on which, in a scene of much power, Norma finally denounces herself as a perjured priestess and mother, commends her children to Clotilda's care, and pleading for her life with her father the Archdruid, offers herself as the victim, and ascends the sacrificial pile. Overcome at her noble conduct, Pollio's old affection is re-awakened, and he shares her fate on the funeral pyre.

Là più puro, là più santo,
Incomincia eterno amor!

I PURITANI.*

THIS Opera is founded upon an incident supposed to have taken place during the great English civil war of the "Cavaliers and Roundheads." The scene is laid at a fortress near Plymouth, of which Lord Walter Walton is the Puritan or Roundhead Governor. He has under his care a female prisoner, supposed to be an emissary of the Stuart cause, but who in reality is no less a personage than Henrietta, widow of the late King Charles I. Lord Walter had promised the hand of his daughter Elvira to Sir Richard Foster, a Puritan colonel, but she being in love with Lord Arthur Talbot, a cavalier, her uncle, Sir George Walton, pleads her cause with her father and secures his consent to her being allowed to refuse the addresses of the Colonel and accept Lord Arthur as her future husband.

* This Opera was composed in Paris in 1834, for Grisi, and was first performed at the Théâtre Italien in that city.

All is prepared for their nuptials, and Lord Arthur comes laden with bridal presents; Henrietta manages to tell him who she is, and how she has been summoned to appear before the Parliament in London, whereupon he determines somehow to effect her escape. Elvira, entering with her bridal veil, and wishing to see how it will look, throws it over Henrietta. Suddenly the idea strikes Lord Arthur that he can pass her off as his bride, and by this means effect her escape from the Castle. Elvira, on hearing of their flight, thinking her lover untrue to her, she goes mad. Lord Walter is excused by the Parliament for allowing the escape of his prisoner, but a large reward is offered for Lord Arthur; nevertheless, he gains an interview with his love, Elvira, she recognizes him, and in her frenzy, being anxious he should not again escape her, she calls for help and he is seized by the guard. She then recovers her senses to find him a doomed prisoner; they are about to lead him off when a messenger arrives bearing a despatch from the Parliament, which contains a free pardon to all political offenders, Cromwell having finally crushed the Stuart cause, and feeling that only by showing mercy could he gain future peace.

LA SONNAMBULA.*

THE Scene of this Opera is in Switzerland. For some time the Villagers have been frightened by the appearance, after night fall, of a figure in white at the village Mill, all asserting it to be a ghost, whereas it in reality is Amina, daughter of Teresa, a peasant, and betrothed to Elvino, a young farmer. She is a *Sonnambulist*. All is arranged for the wedding to take place on the following morning, much to the discomfort of Lisa, the hostess of the village Inn, who was formerly affianced to Elvino.

* "*La Sonnambula*" was written at Milan in the year 1831 for Mme. Pasta. This great songstress was born in 1798, at Como, near Milan; she was of Jewish extraction. During the latter years of her life she lived in retirement on Lake Como, and died 1st of April, 1865.

Adelina Maria Clorinda Patti, one of the daughters of Salvatori Patti, made her debut at Covent Garden Theatre in the character of "*Amina*," 14th of May, 1861. She was born at Madrid, 9th of April,

In the midst of the festivities appears Rodolph, Lord of the district, who is travelling home incognito after many years of absence, having been kidnapped away when a child. As night is fast closing in he takes a bed at the village hostelry.

The Second Act opens with Rodolph in his bed room, when Lisa enters and tells him the villagers are coming to welcome him home. He makes rather pressing love to her, when they are disturbed by the sudden appearance of Amina walking in her sleep, who comes in through the window. Lisa hurries to hide herself in a closet, but in doing so drops her shawl. Amina in her sleep talks about her love for Elvino, and finally lies down on the Count's bed, who, picking up Lisa's shawl, wraps it about her, and then leaves by the window. The villagers, headed by Alessio, a peasant, enter the room, and all are taken aback on discovering Amina asleep on the Count's bed, and Elvino, seeing her affianced in such a position, vows he will not marry her.

In the next Scene Amina and her mother Teresa are making their way to the Castle to ask the Count to tell the truth about the unfortunate adventure, and so to clear Amina's character, when they meet Elvino. Amina pleads her cause to him, but he is obdurate.

The final Act opens with Elvino about to lead Lisa, his old love, to the Altar, when the Count arrives and declares Amina's innocence. Elvino will not believe it, but Teresa produces Lisa's shawl which was found wrapped about Amina in the Count's room; Elvino then demands an explanation from the Count, who says about Lisa he would rather say nothing, but protests that Amina is innocent. Elvino asks who shall prove it, when Amina appears again walking in her sleep along a plank above the water-wheel; she comes down among the astonished villagers, and talks in her sleep in such affectionate terms of Elvino that he is at length convinced of her innocence, and she wakes up to find herself in his arms.

1843, and first appeared on the stage in New York, 24th of November, 1859. In May, 1868, she married at the Roman Catholic Chapel, Clapham, Louis Sebastien Henri de Roger de Cahuzac, Marquis de Caux, but they have since been divorced.

A no less remarkable singer made her debut in the same character, in the person of Mlle. Albani, at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 2nd of April, 1872. She is by birth a Canadian, and was trained by Duprez, the once famous tenor, at the Conservatoire. The name Albani is assumed, it is said, from the Bishop of Albany, who was one of the first to appreciate the wonderful gift of this popular singer.

BIZET.

GEORGES BIZET was born at Paris, 25th of October, 1838. During his but too short career (for he died 3rd of June, 1875) he wrote the following Operas: "Docteur Miracle," produced at the Bouffes Parisiens, in April, 1857; "Vasco di Gama," produced at the Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, in 1863; "Les Pécheurs de Perles," produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, 30th of September, 1863, "Djamileh," and his best work "Carmen," (vide note). In the year 1857 he obtained in the Conservatoire, Paris, the Grand Prix de Rome.

CARMEN.*

CARMEN, the heroine of this Opera, is a gipsy, and one of a band of smugglers; she is employed, with many other girls, in a cigarette factory in Seville. The most remarkable feature in her character is her coquetry and utter incapability of remaining true to one love for any length of time. The hero, José, a sergeant of Dragoons, on the other hand, is of a passionate, jealous, and revengeful nature.

The opening scene is a square in Seville, in which the cigarette factory where Carmen is employed is situated. A crowd of people and soldiers are discovered singing. Micaela enters,—a simple village maiden to whom José was affianced before he joined the army; she has come in search of him, to deliver a message from his old widowed mother. Not finding him, and being impertinently treated by Morales, an officer of Dragoons, she runs away frightened. On José's entrance Morales acquaints him with the

* Carmen was first performed in Paris on the 3rd of March, 1875, and in London at Her Majesty's on the 22nd of June, 1878. During that season it was played no less than nine times, Mlle. Minnie Hauk (who made her début in London, 27th of April, 1878, in "Traviata") taking the part of Carmen. An English adaptation of it was produced by Mr. Carl Rosa, at Her Majesty's, on the 5th of February, 1879, Madame Selina Dolaro sustaining the role of the heroine.

visit of Micaela. The midday bell then sounds, and the girls come pouring out of the factory, among them Carmen. The crowd of men ask her to select a lover, and she throws a flower at Josè and runs off, followed by her companions. He is much struck with her beauty, and is cogitating over the adventure, when Micaela re-enters, who delivers the message from his mother, and he is so overcome by home recollections that he determines to think no more of Carmen. At this moment a great noise is heard in the factory and all rush out, declaring that Carmen has stabbed one of her companions. Zuniga, captain of Dragoons, orders Josè to bind her and lead her off to prison. They are left alone for a few minutes while Zuniga writes out the order for her imprisonment, and Carmen makes good use of the time, for she succeeds in so working upon Josè's feelings that he, declaring his love for her, allows her, on the way to the prison, to escape.

The next Act is in the tavern of Lillas Pastia, outside Seville, a rendezvous of the smugglers. Carmen is discovered surrounded by gipsies and officers of Dragoons, and Zuniga is paying his addresses to her, but without much success. He tells her how Josè has been imprisoned for a month for having allowed her to escape, but that he is to be set at liberty that night. Escamillo, the renowned toreador, or bullfighter, happening to pass, they call him in: he is much struck with the beauty of Carmen, but she refuses all overtures, declaring she loves another. He says he will wait. Lillas Pastia clears the tavern of his guests, but Zuniga tells Carmen he will return an hour hence. When all have gone except Carmen and the other gipsy girls, two of the smugglers, Dancairo and Remendado, enter, who, with their companions, are making their way to Seville with a cargo of goods; they ask the girls to join and assist them in the work. Carmen declares she cannot until the morrow, as she is expecting her lover Josè, and on his entrance they are left alone; she tries to persuade him to join the band, but he refuses, and is about leaving to go to the barracks, when the door is burst open by Zuniga, who, according to his promise, has returned. He orders his sergeant to retire, who, jealous, refuses. Zuniga draws his sword, on which Josè does the same, and they are about to cross blades, when Carmen rushes between them, calls for help, and the band of smugglers coming in, disarm and lead off Zuniga. Josè, seeing that all is over with his career in the army, joins the band.

The third Act is in a retreat of the smugglers, among the mountains. Carmen tells Josè she has lost her love for him on account of his jealousy, and begs him to leave her; he declares he will never do so until death parts them. The smugglers hurry off with their goods, leaving Josè alone as sentinel. Micaela enters, wishing to tell Josè of his mother, but, on hearing the report of a gun, she hides. Enter Escamillo, followed by Josè, who has fired upon but not injured him. He tells Josè he has come for Carmen, thinking it is about time she was sick of her soldier love. Josè, enraged, calls on him to defend himself, and they fight; Escamillo slips and falls, and Josè is about to plunge his knife into him, when the smugglers rush in and drag them apart. Escamillo then asks all to attend the bull-fight in Seville. The smugglers at this moment find Micaela and drag her out. She tells Josè his mother is dying; he, torn between jealousy and filial affection, at length gives way to the better feeling, but, on leaving, warns Carmen they will shortly meet again.

The last Act is in a street outside the Plaza de Tores. The entrance to the Circus is closed by a curtain. The crowd are assembled to witness the great bull-fight, and among them the gipsies. Carmen vows to Escamillo she has never loved anyone as she loves him. All retire into the Circus except Carmen and Josè, who has been hiding among the crowd; he begs her to fly with him, but she declares she loves him no longer. The crowd in the Circus behind are heard singing in chorus the praises of Escamillo. Again and again does Josè plead his cause, but with no effect, and at last she throws the ring he had given her at his feet, and he, in a frenzy of jealousy, while the audience in the Circus are still heard singing, stabs her to the heart. The crowd enter to find Carmen dead, and Josè embracing her corpse.

CIMAROSA.

DOMINICO CIMAROSA was born at Aversa, near Naples, on the 17th of December, 1754, of very humble parentage; his father being a mason, and his mother a washerwoman. When he was but seven years old, his father died, on which Polcano, organist of the Convent, took charge of the boy; and instructed him in Latin and music. He was further educated in the Conservatory of Loretto. His first Operatic production was "*La Stravaganza del Conte*," which was performed in the year 1772. Of the eighty-seven works written by this composer the most remarkable is "*Il Matrimonio Segreto*," (vide note). He died at Venice, where he had gone to write an Opera called "*L'Artemisia*," 11th of January, 1801, having only completed the first Act. It is asserted by some that on account of some political intrigue, he was poisoned by order of Queen Caroline, by others that he was strangled. He married twice, but both his wives died while giving birth to children.

IL MATRIMONIO SEGRETO.* (THE SECRET MARRIAGE.)

PAOLINO, the clerk to a rich merchant, Geronimo, has secretly married Caroline, Geronimo's youngest daughter. With a view to propitiating his father-in-law, Paolino has arranged a marriage between his friend, Count Robinson, and Elisetta, Caroline's sister. Geronimo is delighted at the idea of his daughter Elisetta becoming a Countess. Count Robinson arrives, and not having seen his intended bride before, falls in love with Caroline instead of Elisetta, whom he positively refuses to marry.

* This opera was written at Vienna in the year 1792. On its first production it caused so great a furore that Leopold, Emperor of Austria, gave a large supper to the performers and orchestra. It was performed at Naples the following year, where it had a "run" of 67 nights.

Geronimo is very angry, when the Count offers to give him back half the dower Elisetta was to receive if he will let him marry Caroline instead. Geronimo at first consents to the new arrangement; but the plot thickens.

Fidalma, a young widow, sister of Geronimo, has fallen in love with Paolino, who discovers it quite unexpectedly, when, in his desperation, he is about to appeal to her to get him out of his difficulty, and Fidalma joins Elisetta in persuading Geronimo to send Caroline to a convent. Paolino and Caroline are in despair, and, as a last resource, prepare to elope together; but the watchful and jealous Elisetta discovers them. She wakes up the house, thinking she has heard the Count and Caroline in a room together. The situation culminates in the discovery by all that it is not the Count but Paolino who is with Caroline. The pair are then driven to tell their secret. Geronimo is furious, but is persuaded to forgive them on the Count goodnaturedly taking Elisetta as his wife after all. Fidalma is left out in the cold, but takes it philosophically.

Giacchè il caso è desperato
Ci dobbiamo contentar.

DONIZETTI.

GARTANO DONIZETTI was born at Bergamo on the 25th of September, 1798. His father had destined him for the Law, but he himself thought he had more taste for Architecture. Both father and son were wrong, and Nature asserting herself, soon showed what was the real bent of his mind. He studied music in the Lyceum at Bergamo, under Mayr, Salari, and Gonzalès, and at Bologna, under Mattei and Pilotti. His first operatic work, entitled "Enrico conte di Borgogna," was performed at Venice in the year 1818, and his last Opera, "Catarina Cornaro," was written at Naples in the year 1844. On the 17th of August, 1845, he had a stroke of paralysis which affected his brain; all means were adopted to effect a cure but without success, and, as a last resource, his friends determined to try what his native air would do for him. He arrived at Bergamo on the 1st of April, 1848, and, dying eight days afterwards, was buried in the Cathedral of that town.

ANNA BOLENA.

ANNE BOLEYN is under the displeasure of her royal husband, and Jane Seymour is in the ascendant. Anne and her ladies are waiting for the King at night, and Smeaton, the minstrel page, sings to them. The King does not come, so all retire. The King, however, enters by a secret door and holds an interview with Jane Seymour, in which he promises her the throne, and darkly hints at breaking the marriage bonds with Anne by means he will not disclose. Percy, having returned to England, is anxious to see Anne, to whom (according to the story of the opera, but not according to true history) he was betrothed before her marriage. He is shown to her rooms but, unfortunately, Smeaton, the page, who is in love with the Queen, is in

* Composed and produced in the year 1831, at Milan, with great success

the room behind the curtains. Consequently, when Percy is about to kill himself with his sword because the Queen refuses to give him another interview, Smeaton rushes out to prevent him. An uproar ensues, and the King and courtiers enter, when Anne Boleyn is publicly denounced as faithless by the King.

In the second Act Anne is in prison. Jane Seymour comes to her to advise her to confess that she is guilty, consent to a divorce, and so save her life, otherwise the King is determined to convict her. In the interview it transpires that Jane is to be Queen when the King is free, and Anne first denounces then pardons her rival.

The rest of the opera consists of dialogues between Percy and Henry, and Henry and his unfortunate Queen, Anne, and also his new love, Jane Seymour, until it is announced that the peers have found the Queen guilty, and condemned her, Percy Smeaton, and Rochford, Anne's brother, to death. Percy and Rochford indignantly refuse the pardon which is offered them. Smeaton confesses to the Queen that he has perjured himself, while Anne loses her mind, and raves in a delirium of madness. From this she is awoken by the cannon proclaiming Jane Queen, and dies in the arms of her ladies of a broken heart.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the Queen's madness is not historically correct.

L'ELISIR D'AMORE.*

(THE ELIXIR OF LOVE.)

THE scene opens in the country. Reapers are resting beneath a tree, under which are seated also Adina and her friend Gianetta. Nemorino, a countryman, who is in love with Adina, stands near in a melancholy mood at the hopelessness of his suit, and overhears Gianetta reading a love-story to Adina, recounting how one Tristano succeeded in wooing his love, Isotta, by means of a love elixir given to him by a sage enchanter. Nemorino is fired with the determination to procure a similar love-philter to assist him in winning the love of

* Composed at Naples in the year 1832.

Adina. In the nick of time Dr. Dulcamara, the notorious travelling quack doctor, arrives in the village to a sound of trumpets. Nemorino repairs to the doctor in his gilt chariot, who, for a piastre, supplies him with a bottle of what he wants. This in reality is but a bottle of wine. Nemorino drinks it, and it enables him so far to conquer his natural diffidence that he temporarily gets rid of his love-sickness, and succeeds in inducing Adina to think he does not care for her. She in womanly fashion is the more determined to hold him in her chains, and tortures poor Nemorino by promising to marry his rival, the sergeant Belcore, quartered in the village, who makes love in a far bolder fashion than the timid Nemorino. He is invited to the nuptials of the sergeant and Adina. He there meets Dulcamara, and asks for another bottle of the elixir. But he has no money. In despair, in order to procure the coin, he, by the sergeant's advice, enlists as a soldier, and so gets twenty crowns in his pocket. After the second dose he is convinced of its efficacy, for all the village girls come round him, paying him a great deal of attention, the real cause of their changed behaviour being the fact that Nemorino's uncle has died and left him a fortune, of which he is at present unaware.

The dance is about to begin; the girls are all importunate to secure Nemorino as their partner. Adina is distracted, for she wishes to marry Nemorino now, while Dr. Dulcamara is perhaps the most astonished at the marvellous effects of his bottle, which he never anticipated. He offers a bottle to Adina, but she knows better; she has a better elixir in her own eyes wherewith to charm him, and she tells the Doctor so. She pays the smart-money, and buys back from the sergeant Nemorino's contract for enlistment, meets her lover and marries him.

In the last scene the discomforted sergeant has to salute his rival, and the disclosure is made that Nemorino has become a rich man owing to the death of his uncle. Dulcamara vows he knew it all along, but there is something which the world does not yet know: the marvellous effects of his elixir, &c., &c., of which he there and then sells a number of bottles, remounts his gilt chariot, and passes on to the next town.

LA FAVORITA.*

(THE FAVOURITE.)

THE scene is laid in Spain. Fernando, a novice, about to take monastic vows, suddenly startles his friends, the monks, by telling them that he is in love and means to renounce the life of a priest, for which he was preparing himself. The object of his admiration is one Leonora, who also loves him, but has not dared to disclose to him the fact that she is the "Favourite" for whom his Majesty, Alphonso XI, is prepared to put aside his wife, and whom he then means to make the partner of his throne. Fernando is the soul of honour, and Leonora knowing this does not tell him who and what she is, but she procures for him a commission in the army from the King, and beseeches him never to see her again. Meanwhile, the King is threatened with excommunication if he divorces his wife for Leonora, and shortly Fernando reappears, having greatly distinguished himself in war. The King is ready to grant him anything. He asks for Leonora's hand, not knowing who she is. The King grants his request, and loads him with titles and honours. The marriage is celebrated when, to his horror, Fernando finds he has married the King's mistress. In a storm of indignation he renounces the King's service, breaks his sword, and leaves, to rejoin the monastic life he abandoned for Leonora's sake.

In the last Act Fernando is followed to the church, where he is preparing for his religious life, by Leonora. In a heart-breaking scene in the church she tells him that she had always thought her confidante, Ines, had told him who she was, and

* This Opera, one of Donizetti's best productions, was performed at Paris in the year 1840, when it met with but a cold reception; so much so, that the composer had difficulty in finding a purchaser of the score, and when he did so, only got 3000 francs for it. In the month of April, 1857, Antoine Giuglini, the well-known tenor, was heard, for the first time in England, at Her Majesty's Theatre, in this opera. He was born at Fermo in the year 1824. He studied under Maestro Cellini, and made his debut at Venice in 1854, in Don Pasquale. In Feb., 1865, when at St. Petersburg, he was taken ill and believed himself to have been poisoned: from there he was conveyed to England, having become insane, and he was placed under the care of Dr. Tuke, at Chiswick. In July of that year he was removed to Italy, and died at Pesaro, 12th of October, 1865, aged 41 years.

implores his forgiveness. His love for her overcomes his scruples, so that he proposes to fly with her; but she refuses to put his soul in peril, and dies with the words of his love and forgiveness in her ears.

LA FIGLIA DEL REGGIMENTO.*

(THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT.)

THE daughter of the regiment is Maria, a Vivandiere, attached to the 11th regiment of Napoleon's army, at this time invading the Tyrol. She had been found a child on the field of battle by Sulpizio, a sergeant of the regiment, and had been brought up, so to speak, as the child of the regiment. While in the French camp, a prisoner is brought in, a Tyrolese, Tonio by name, who on one occasion saved the life of Maria when she was on the point of falling over a precipice. She intercedes for him and his life is spared, he consenting to join the regiment. It is scarcely necessary to say that they vow constancy to each other. Tonio obtains the consent of the regiment to his making Maria his wife, when the Marchioness of Berkenfeld appears in the camp, and to her Sulpizio hands a letter which was found on the body of the servant who had charge of Maria when she was first picked up, and which was addressed to the Marchioness. She claims Maria as her niece, who takes an affecting farewell of the regiment, leaving Tonio in distraction.

The second Act is laid at the Castle of the Marchioness. She in vain attempts to teach Maria a love-song in the classical style, for her niece keeps breaking in with snatches of the regimental songs, in which she is encouraged by Sulpizio, who is at the Castle with a wounded arm. Maria is bewailing her fate at having to marry a duke, whom her aunt wishes to be her husband, when the gallant 11th seize the Castle—Tonio at their head—with the avowed determination to prevent the daughter of the regiment from being forced to marry against her will.

* Was first produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, with but poor success, owing to the bad rendering of the part of "Maria." When afterwards performed in both Italy and Germany it won great applause.

Eventually the Marchioness allows her better feelings to get the upper hand, and, refusing to be the author of misery to Maria, who is in reality her daughter, and not her niece, she consents to her union with Tonio.

LINDA DI CHAMOUNIX.*

THIS Opera tells the love-story of Linda, a Swiss girl, the daughter of a farmer, Antonio, who lives at Chamounix. The scene opens at the latter Village. Maddalena, Linda's mother, speaks with her husband on the, to them, all-important topic whether or no they will have to give up their farm, which they hold of the Marchioness of Sirval. The Marquis Boisfleury, a *roué*, is her brother, and he, having designs upon Linda, promises her father and mother that their farm shall be secure. Linda is in love with Charles, a young artist apparently, but who, in reality, is Vicount di Sirval, son of the Marchioness, and nephew to Boisfleury. The good Prefect of the village tells Antonio that Boisfleury is deceiving him in pretending to be kind to them, his real object being to obtain Linda, and recommends that Linda should go to Paris out of his way with the peasants who are making their annual winter journey thither. She goes, under the escort of Pierotto, and is to stay with a brother of the Prefect.

The second Act introduces Linda in handsome apartments in Paris, provided for her by Charles, who has followed her from Chamounix. Pierotto had found the Prefect's brother dead, and while he was away she had fled from him with Charles. Pierotto by chance finds her, having been singing in the streets for money under her window. Boisfleury also finds her out and visits her, much to her disgust. Charles, meanwhile, has been forbidden by his mother to marry her, and is about to be forced into a match which he dislikes, but on which his mother insists. Before he has divulged this to Linda, Antonio, her father, who also has come to Paris, calls at the house of Charles to ask for charity as a dependant of the Sirval family. Linda and he

* Was first performed at Vienna in the year 1842, and met with so great a success that the Emperor of Austria appointed Donizetti composer to the Court and Master of the Imperial Chapel.

recognise each other, and the good Antonio, shocked at his daughter's position, renounces her for ever. At the same time Pierotto informs her that Charles is about to be married. She loses her reason, and the second Act closes as she, conducted by Pierotto, leaves Paris for her old home.

The last Act opens with the scene at Chamounix again. The Marquis has returned from Paris and, in jovial fashion, announces the approaching marriage of his nephew, the Viscount. In the midst of this Pierotto appears, leading back to her home Linda bereft of reason. But the Viscount also appears on the scene; and it turns out that he is meaning to marry Linda after all, and has come to settle the farm on her parents, when he hears of her sad mental condition. In an interview with her, however, the sound of his voice in the old love-song restores her to her right mind; and the story ends at this satisfactory point, amid the general rejoicings of the villagers at the approaching nuptials of Charles, now the Viscount, and Linda.

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR.*

THE opera is founded on the story of "The Bride of Lammermoor. The scene is in Scotland in the last century. Henry Ashton, the brother of Lucy wishes her to marry Arthur, whose aid he needs to support him in his feud with Edgar, the master of Ravenswood. Lucy and Edgar are in love with each other; they meet in secret and exchange mutual vows, previous to Edgar's leaving the country for France. Lucy refuses to marry Arthur, but is persuaded into doing so on being shown a forged letter—which her brother has had prepared—in which Edgar is described as faithless to her. She signs the marriage contract to save her brother, when Edgar suddenly appears. He is furious, and passionately returns her pledge of love and seizes that which he had given her, trampling it under his feet.

In the last Act, at the bridal banquet, it is announced that the tragedy has taken place in the bridal bedchamber. Lucy is mad, and in her frenzy has stabbed her husband to the heart.

* Was composed and produced at Naples in the year 1835. Owing to the great success of the opera the composer was appointed Professor of Counterpoint to the Royal College of Music at Naples.

Edgar is wandering among the tombs of his ancestors when the news is brought to him that Lucy is dying. He flies to see her once more but is too late; and in his misery, and exclaiming that he will rejoin her, he plunges his dagger into his heart, and dies.

LUCREZIA BORGIA.*

THIS opera commences with a prologue; the scene of which is Venice. On the terrace of the Grimani Palace a number of persons are talking, amongst them Gennaro, a young man who has been brought up as a fisherman, but who in reality is the son of Lucrezia Borgia. His friends leave him sleeping, on which Lucrezia, masked, arrives at the terrace in a gondola and, landing, contemplates her son, who is still sleeping, in tears. Taking off her mask, she is noticed and recognized by Alphonso, her husband, the Duke of Ferrara, who has followed her secretly. He tells his companion to bring Gennaro to Ferrara by any means, and leaves without disturbing his wife. She then has an interview with Gennaro, who speaks of his love for his mother, whom he has never seen. They are interrupted by Orsini and others, who rudely tear off Lucrezia's mask and disclose to Gennaro that she is the Borgia. Gennaro has not yet learnt that she is his mother, and is horrified to find he has been talking with the hated Borgia.

At this point the prologue ends, and the first Act of the tragedy opens in a square at Ferrara, on one side of which is the Palace of the Duke. On the wall in gilt letters is the name "Borgia." Gennaro is living near the Palace. His friend Orsini taunts him with still thinking of Lucrezia, whom they had seen him talking with at Venice. He professes his hatred for her, and to show it, strikes out with his sword the first letter of Borgia from the characters on the Palace wall. The Duke has sent out emissaries to take Gennaro, and Lucrezia also in-

* Was produced at Milan in the year 1833. In the year 1872 Itale Campanini first appeared at Her Majesty's, London, in this opera. He was born 1846, and was present at the taking of Capua in 1860, being then only aged 14 years. He studied at the Conservatoire, Parma, his native town, and made his début in Russia as second tenor.

structs agents to take the person who has thus insulted her name. She appeals to her husband to avenge her. To her horror Gennaro is brought in as the culprit. The Duke compels her against her will to pour out some poisoned wine for Gennaro, having made a pretence of sparing his life. But Lucrezia gives him an antidote, and Gennaro escapes by a secret door.

In the last Act Gennaro and his old companions of Venice—Orsini and the rest who were rude to Lucrezia, as is told in the prologue—are at supper with the Princess Negroni. Gubetta, an agent of the Duchess, is there, and contrives, by quarrelling with Orsini, to get the ladies out of the room. Wine is then brought in, which all drink but Gubetta. It contains poison. Lucrezia appears to explain to her victims how she has thus revenged their insulting conduct at Venice, when, to her horror, she finds Gennaro there. She beseeches him to take the antidote again, but he will not, as there is not enough for his friends as well as himself. He takes a knife to kill Lucrezia, when she reveals the fact that she is his mother. He dies in her arms. Alphonso and soldiers then enter, and in her husband's presence Lucrezia falls lifeless on the body of her son.

DON PASQUALE.*

NORINA, the heroine of this opera-bouffe, is a young widow, with whom Ernesto, a young Italian gentleman, is in love. Ernesto, of course, finds the course of love run anything but smoothly, owing to the prejudice of his rich uncle, Don Pasquale, who wishes him to marry someone else, and threatens to disinherit Ernesto if he does not comply with his wishes. But the lovers have a good friend in the family physician, Dr. Malatesta. Don Pasquale having consulted him with reference to his own marriage—the Don having determined to marry himself to spite his nephew—the doctor introduces Norina to him as his sister, and suggests that she would suit the Don.

* Was composed at Paris in the year 1843, and there produced with the greatest success, no doubt partly owing to the admirable rendering of the "Don" by Lablache. Donizetti is said to have written out the score in eight days.

The nuptials having been duly celebrated by a sham marriage ceremony, Norina plays her part in the plot against the Don by at once launching out into reckless extravagance; ordering carriages, horses, and new furniture, to the great chagrin of her mock husband. She also takes care to drop a letter in his way referring to an assignation with a gallant in the garden. This is more than the old gentleman can bear. In a fury he repairs to Malatesta, and insists upon his coming to the garden with him to surprise his faithless wife. They find Norina there, and Don Pasquale orders her from the house, which she refuses to leave. In despair, he gives Malatesta *carte blanche* to do what he likes if only he can get rid of her. The Doctor tells him his only chance is to let Ernesto marry Norina, as then his sister will not stay in the same house with Norina. The Don consents, and is then told of the trick which has been played on him, and good-humouredly sanctions the marriage of Ernesto and Norina; glad to have escaped from what threatened to be a most unfortunate match for himself.

FLOTOW.

FRIEDRICH FERDINAND ADOLPH VON FLOTOW was born 27th April, 1812, at Tentendorf, the ancient seat of his family in Mecklenburg. His father intended him to follow the diplomatic service, but finding that he possessed a remarkable talent for music, he was allowed at the age of sixteen to follow his inclinations, and sent to study music in Paris under Reicha. When the Revolution broke out Flotow returned to his family, and then began to publish his compositions. The first opera that appeared was "Pierre et Catherine." "Rob Roy" was produced in 1832; the "Duchess of Guise" 1838; "L'Esclave du Camœns" 1843; "Martha," which is one of the most popular, was produced 25th November, 1847, in Paris.

MARTHA.

THE scene of *Martha* is essentially English. It is laid at Richmond in Surrey, in the reign of Queen Anne. One of her Majesty's Maids of Honour, Lady Henrietta by name, having grown weary of the delights of court, and longing to see some fresh phase of life, one day overhears some peasants singing on their way to the Statute Fair at Richmond, and is instantly seized with the idea of accompanying them in the disguise of a servant. She persuades her cousin and old lover, Sir Tristan, and her maid Nancy to go with her. As soon as they reach the Fair and take their places amongst the group of servants, two young farmers Plunket and Lionel come up, and offer to take Martha and Nancy into their service, the girls accept the earnest-fee offered to them, and are thereby legally bound to the farmers for a year. On discovering this they are frightened and try to escape, and Tristan interferes on their behalf, but he is driven off from the place, and the girls are taken to the farmhouse and taught their work. Lionel at once falls in love with Martha,

but she only laughs at his declaration of affection. Tristan discovers where his cousin has been taken to, and comes in the night and releases the girls, the farmers are roused by the noise of their departure, and follow in pursuit. Lionel, who is sincerely in love with Henrietta, becomes perfectly miserable over her loss, and one day on meeting her in the forest of Richmond out hunting with the Queen, he rushes up and again pleads his passion. She answers him rudely as before and he then threatens her with insisting on the fulfilment of her contract. She tells the astonished courtiers that he is insane, and her behaviour almost succeeds in upsetting his reason. His friend Plunket waits upon him with the tenderest affection, Lionel's supposed father having committed the young man to his care, and charged that whenever Lionel was in great distress Plunket should take a certain ring to Queen Anne that his real father had bequeathed when he died. This ring is at last presented to the Queen through the intercession of Henrietta and it is thereby discovered that Lionel is in reality Earl of Derby, the son of a deceased nobleman who was banished from his estates. The Queen restores the young earl to his rank but he remains distracted from the effects of Henrietta's cruelty, and when she relent and promises to marry him he is unable to apprehend the happy change. Eventually Henrietta tries the experiment of holding an imaginary Statute Fair in the Park, at which she and Lionel attend in their old costumes. The influence of past associations recall Lionel's wandering mind, and his senses are completely restored. He marries his beloved Henrietta, and Plunket marries Nancy.

GOUNOD.

CHARLES FRANÇOIS GOUNOD was born at Paris on the 17th of June, 1818. He received his musical education of Halévy, (at the Conservatoire,) Lesueur, and Paër. In the year 1837 he gained the second prize at the Institute; and in 1839 he carried off the first prize for his cantata entitled "Fernand." He was elected a member of the French Institute, Section of Music, in May, 1866; and was made commander of the Legion of Honour in August, 1877.

The following is a list of M. Gounod's operatic productions:—
 "Sapho,"—performed in Paris on the 16th of April, 1851; "La Nonne Sanglante,"—produced 18th of October, 1854; a comic opera, entitled "Le Médecin malgré lui,"—first performed at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris, 1858; "Faust" (vide note); "Philemon et Baucis,"—produced at the Théâtre Lyrique, 18th of February, 1860; "La Reine de Saba," 1862; "Mireille,"—produced in London in 1864; "Romeo and Juliet,"—produced both in London and Paris in 1867; and "Polyeucte,"—performed for the first time at the Opera House, Paris, on the 7th of October, 1878. M. Gounod has married a daughter of the late Pierre Joseph Guillaume Zimmerman.

FAUST.*

FAUST, an old German student, or philosopher, having spent all his days in deep research into the secrets of Nature, becomes disgusted with the smallness of his knowledge, and invoking the Evil one, Mefistofele (*Mephistopheles*) appears. Faust begs him to restore to him his youth; this the demon promises, on condition that Faust will sign a document. On his not much caring to do this, Mefistofele causes a vision to appear of a beautiful girl spinning, whom he promises to give to Faust. He at once signs, and, draining a goblet, is changed from an old worn-out man into a handsome youth.

* This opera was first performed in Paris on the 19th of March, 1859, and proved the greatest success.

Margherita (*Margaret*)—the maiden whom Mefistofele caused to appear to Faust in the vision,—is an humble, pure-minded girl, with no relations save one brother, Valentino (*Valentine*); and he, on leaving for the war, places her under the care of a kindly but foolish old dame called Marta (*Martha*), and a mere boy called Siebel, who is in love with Margherita. Against this unprotected maiden Mefistofele brings all his power to bear, merely using Faust as his agent to secure the death of her soul. The Demon makes love to the chaperone Marta, while Faust is left to use all his powers to ingratiate himself with Margherita. He at first is unsuccessful, and is himself so struck with her pureness that he is on the point of relinquishing the diabolical scheme, but Mefistofele stifles the cries of his conscience, and Margherita, again assailed, gives way.

Valentine, returning from the war, and finding his once pure sister shunned by all, challenges Faust, her seducer, but is killed in the encounter, through the assistance of the Demon. Margherita, on the death of her brother, goes mad, and in a frenzy kills the child she has born to Faust. For this she is cast into prison and doomed to the scaffold. Overcome with remorse, Faust, accompanied by Mefistofele, who never leaves him, gains access to her prison; he begs her to fly with him, but she refuses, telling him that to Heaven alone she looks for assistance, and, praying God to forgive her, falls dead at their feet.

A chorus of celestial beings is heard singing pardon to the repentant sinner, and the prison walls opening, disclose Margherita's soul being borne aloft toward heaven. Faust falls on his knees and prays, while Mefistofele, struck by the avenging sword of the Archangel, falls prostrate on the ground.

ROMEO AND JULIET.*

(ROMEO E GIULIETTA.)

IN this opera Shakespeare's tragedy is very closely followed. The first Act opens in a Hall in the house of Capulet, the father of Juliet, where a grand entertainment is being held. The

* This opera was produced both in London and Paris in the year 1867.

chorus sing of the charms of dancing, &c. On the entrance of Juliet with her father, Paris, to whom she is affianced, leads her off to the dancing saloon, and the rest follow. On their departure, Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolo and others enter masked; they linger talking and laughing at Romeo about his ladylove Rosaline, when he, looking off, sees Juliet in the dancing room, and is so struck with her beauty that he at once falls desperately in love with her. They leave the hall, and Juliet enters with her nurse Gertrude; meantime Romeo re-enters with Gregory, an old servant of Capulet's, and the latter by calling away the nurse leaves Juliet unintentionally alone with her new admirer. Romeo is declaring his love for her when they are interrupted by the entrance of Theobald, her cousin, who, seeing through Romeo's disguise, recognises him as a Montague, *i.e.*, one of a race at enmity with the Capulets; he is about to insult him but is stopped by Capulet, and Romeo is dragged away by his friend Mercutio.

The next Act is the well-known balcony scene. In this the Librettist introduces a character unknown to Shakespeare, in the person of Stephano, Romeo's page. He is discovered helping his master by means of a rope ladder; he then leaves, taking the ladder with him. Romeo and Juliet are disturbed in their interview by the entrance of Gregory with servants and Juliet's old nurse, whose equilibrium has been disturbed by having found Stephano hanging about. They search the garden, but fail in finding any trace of Romeo, who, meantime, has hid. Juliet then joins them, coming from the house which she re-enters with her nurse, but on Romeo again appearing, the servants having gone, she comes out, and they arrange to be secretly married on the following day in spite of her being betrothed to Paris.

The third Act opens in the cell of Friar Lawrence, who is discovered kneeling before a crucifix. Romeo enters, followed shortly afterwards by Juliet and her nurse, and on their demanding it, he then and there marries them, hoping thereby to end the feud between the two houses of Montague and Capulet. The scene then changes to a street in Verona, in which is situated Capulet's house. Stephano is discovered loitering about looking for his master; he then sings a song in the hopes of attracting the attention of the servants, and so hearing from them something of Romeo. They all flock out, headed by Gregory, who, on recognizing the page whom they had the night

before driven away, is very wroth, and after a little parlying they cross swords. Enter Mercutio Benvolo, Theobald and Paris, and lastly Romeo, the fight then becomes general. Theobald calls upon Romeo to fight with him but he refuses, on which Mercutio takes up the matter and is mortally wounded. Romeo then draws on Theobald, and avenges the death of his friend by slaying him in his turn. Capulet and citizens then enter, attracted by the noise, and on seeing Theobald dying, vow vengeance upon Romeo, who declares himself ready to die. The Duke of Verona entering, all call on him to avenge their wrong. He tells Romeo to quit the country by daybreak—who leaves, vowing to see Juliet once more.

In the fourth Act we are conveyed to the chamber of Juliet. She is discovered with her husband, Romeo, sitting at her feet. They talk of the late tumult, and the death of her cousin, and of the hardship of their lot, having thus to separate so soon after their marriage, &c. As day breaks Romeo takes his departure, leaving by the balcony. Gertrude then enters hastily to warn Juliet of the approach of her father, accompanied by Friar Lawrence. They enter, and her father then tells her that she must marry Paris on the morrow. She is about to declare herself the wife of another, but is stopped by the Friar and nurse. Capulet and Gertrude then depart, leaving Juliet and Friar Lawrence alone. She vows she will sooner take her own life than undergo the mock ceremony with Paris, but the Friar comforts her by giving her a phial containing a potion that will cause her to sleep a sleep like death for forty-two hours, and promises that after her funeral he will bring Romeo to the tomb, when they can fly together—she takes it. Paris, Capulet and friends then enter bringing the wedding ring. Juliet gradually swoons away and falls at last apparently dead into the arms of her father.

Act five shows the interior of the tomb of the Capulet's; and Juliet apparently dead is discovered lying in state. A noise is heard as of a door being burst open, and Romeo enters. He is ignorant of the fact of her having taken the potion, and imagines that he sees her corpse. Overcome with grief he takes a phial of poison from his pouch and pledging her in it, drains it to the last drop; hardly is this done than Juliet recovers from her trance. They are about to fly together when he is seized with faintness and tells her he has taken poison; on his falling she seizes the phial, but, on finding it empty, draws a dagger, stabs herself, and dies in the arms of her lover.

MIRELLA.

THE story of Mirella is taken from a Provençal poem called "Miréio," written by Mistral.

In the first Act of the opera the heroine Mirella is seen with a group of village girls singing a pastoral chorus, under the shade of a mulberry plantation. When the song is ended the girls ask Mirella as to the truth of her being in love with Vincenzo, a handsome youth, who is only a poor basket maker by trade. Mirella frankly acknowledges her affection, on which Tavena, a reputed witch, warns her to be cautious in her avowals lest her father Raimondo (a rich farmer) should not approve of the union. Vincenzo comes in and the Act closes with expressions of devotion between the lovers.

The second Act opens with a dance in the Arena at Arles, here Mirella and Vincenzo meet, but are separated in the crowd. Tavena tells Mirella that a fierce herdsman, named Urias, has been to Raimondo to ask for her hand in marriage, and soon afterwards Urias approaches Mirella and declares his affection, which she rejects with scorn. He retires in anger to report her refusal to her father. Vincenzo's father, Ambrogio, (attended by his son, and his daughter Vincenzina,) next calls upon Raimondo and asks that Vincenzo and Mirella may be united, but the former indignantly refuses to consent. Mirella, overhearing this, rushes in and declares she will marry no one else. Raimondo flies into a violent passion and tries to strike his daughter, but is restrained by her falling at his feet and imploring mercy for her dead mother's sake. The two fathers now upbraid each other, the lovers renew their vows, Urias utters threats of vengeance, Vincenzina pours forth expressions of sympathy and the curtain falls.

A Harvest Home is being held, in Act III, at Raimondo's farm, Mirella appears in deep dejection and is soon joined by Vincenzina with the news that Urias has wounded Vincenzo in the head with an iron trident, but that the latter is being tenderly nursed by Tavena. Mirella at once determines to go on a pilgrimage to the church of S. Marie, in the desert of Cro, in order to offer prayers for her lover's recovery. She is next seen in the desert struggling across the hot plains under the burning

rays of the sun. A shepherd boy, Andreluno, goes by singing a song in praise of the joys of pastoral life. Mirella's brain is affected by a sun stroke and she sees a vision of Jerusalem in her madness, and pursues her way across the plain in hopes of reaching the holy city.

In the last Act she arrives at the church of S. Marie; a procession of pilgrims come in chanting psalms. Vincenzo is amongst the crowd and speaks to Mirella, but she does not know him at first. Eventually the sound of the sacred music restores her reason, and she falls into her lovers arms; Raimondo approaches and asks her forgiveness for his cruelty, Vincenzina and the pilgrims surround the group, and all join in singing a chorus of gratitude for the recovery and happiness of the faithful lovers.

HÉROLD.

LOUIS JOSEPH FERDINAND HÉROLD was son of François Joseph Hérold, a well-known professor of the pianoforte. He was born at Paris on the 28th of January, 1791. In July, 1810, he took the first prize at the Conservatoire as a pianist. In 1811 he commenced studying composition under Méhul, and a year and a half afterwards took the first prize in that branch of the art at the Conservatoire. His first work for the stage was entitled "La Gioventù di Enrico Quinto," an opera in two acts, which was produced at Naples with great success. In 1816 "Charles de France" and "Les Rosières," both first played in Paris. His next work was "La Clochette," which was followed by a comic opera, entitled "Premier Venu," in 1818. In the year 1819 a comic opera, entitled "Troqueurs," and a one-act opera, called "L'Amour Platonique." In 1820 he produced "L'Auteur mort et Vivant," which met with so poor a reception that Hérold in disgust threw his pen on one side for three years and took the situation, then vacant, of pianist to the Italian Opera, Paris. In 1823 his opera, entitled "Le Muletier," was played at the Opéra Comique with success, and the same year he produced "Lasthéine;" in 1824 "Le roi Renè" and "Le Lapin blanc." On the 12th of August, 1826, the three-act opera, entitled "Marie," was first heard at the Opéra Comique; in 1829 "L'Illusion"; 1830 "Emmeline"; and in 1831 "Zampa" (vide note). This was followed by "La Médecine sans Médecin" and "Pré aux Clercs," which latter was produced 15th of December, 1832, just one month before the death of the composer. Hérold died on the 19th of January, 1833, at Thernes, near Paris, and was buried in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise. He left an unfinished opera, entitled "Ludovic," which M. Hélévy afterwards completed, and it was performed with great success in 1834.

ZAMPA.*

THE opening scene is a gothic hall in the palace of Lugano, a wealthy Florentine merchant. Among other statues in the

* Was first performed in Paris, with great success, on the 3rd of May, 1831.

hall is one of a lady draped and veiled, with this inscription:—"Alvina di Manfredi, MDCIV." Alfonso, a Sicilian officer, is talking with his affianced bride, Camilla, only child of Lugano, about their nuptials—which are to take place that day—and of the absence of her father, when Rita, Camilla's maid, mentions Zampa the Pirate; Alfonso says they need not fear him, as he has been taken prisoner. Camilla then relates the story of the unfortunate Alvina, to whose memory the statue was erected; how she was first seduced and then deserted by the Count of Monza, and, retiring into private life, spent the remainder of her days in good deeds. Alfonso tells her that the Count of Monza was his brother, and that he died in Spain in disgrace. Rita enters, and says that a band of gentlemen are awaiting Alfonso in the citron grove. He leaves, promising to return. Hardly has he gone than Dandolo, the bellman, enters agitated and describes how he has been stopped on the road by a man armed to the teeth. While telling his tale there enters the Unknown, who discloses himself to Camilla as Zampa, and tells her that her father and Alfonso are both his prisoners, and if she wishes to save her father's life she must consent to marry him.

Zampa and his companions take possession of the Palace, and at a carouse the pirate places a ring on the finger of the statue, proclaiming it to be his bride. The statue's hand closes upon it. Camilla, to save her father's life, consents to wed Zampa. Alfonso, having escaped, waylays Pietro, the messenger of the pirates, bearing a letter from Messina. Zampa is just about to lead Camilla to the altar when Alfonso and soldiers with Pietro come in. They open the letter, and find it to be a free pardon from the King to Zampa, who triumphantly leads Camilla into the chapel to be married.

Camilla, on the evening of her wedding-day, is sitting in her apartment when Alfonso enters, who begs her to fly with him. She refuses; at the same time telling him that Zampa took an oath that he would consent to her first request after marriage. Alfonso hides on the terrace outside. Zampa enters; Camilla reminds him of his promise, and says she is determined to spend her days in a convent. On his refusing, Alfonso rushes in, dagger in hand, but falls back on hearing Zampa proclaim himself to be Count of Monza. Camilla, trying to escape Zampa, overturns the lamps: all is darkness. The statue appears, seizes Zampa, and they sink together in a fiery abyss.

The opera ends with the eruption of Mount Etna.

LE PRÉ AUX CLERCS.

THE heroine of this opera is a young and fascinating Béarnaize Countess, named Isabelle de Montral, a maid of honour to Queen Marguerite of Navarre.

The queen is detained at the Louvre as a hostage of peace between her husband, Henry IV., of Navarre, and her brother, Henry III., of France. Whilst she is there with her attendants, Isabelle's charms excite universal admiration amongst the French courtiers and the king's favourite, Comminge, a colonel and renowned swordsman, is anxious to marry her.

Isabelle's affections are already fixed on the Baron de Mergy, a young Béarnaize nobleman, who returns her love and whose suit is favoured by the queen. Mergy is sent by the king of Navarre to Paris to recall the queen, and when he reaches Nicette's inn at Etampes on his way, he finds preparations being made for Nicette's wedding with Girot, the host of the famous Pré aux Clercs, in Paris. Mergy meets Cantarelli at Etampes, the director of the court festivities, and learns all that has happened about Isabelle. Shortly afterwards queen Marguerite and Isabelle, having been hunting in the neighbourhood, stop at Nicette's inn for refreshment and the lovers meet. Comminge observes their agitation and his mind is filled with suspicion as to its cause.

Mergy delivers his despatches to the king who refuses to comply with the demands contained in them, and at the same time announces that Comminge is going to be married to Isabelle. Queen Marguerite now comes to the help of the lovers, and plots with Nicette and Cantarelli to arrange that they shall be secretly married at the same time as Nicette and Girot in the chapel of the Pré aux Clercs.

Cantarelli misleads Comminge to believe that a love intrigue exists between Mergy and the queen, and Comminge meeting Mergy at a masked ball rallies him on this subject, they quarrel and a duel is arranged for the following night.

Mergy and Isabelle are secretly united according to the queen's arrangement, and immediately afterwards he fights with the colonel and kills him. Mergy and Isabelle then escape from Paris, and fly to Navarre for safety.

MEYERBEER.

GIACOMO MEYERBEER was a son of a wealthy banker, born at Berlin, 5th of September, 1794. All the family seem to have been highly gifted. Wilhelm Beer, brother of the above Giacomo, was a well-known astronomer, and Michel Beer, another brother, showed great promise as a poet, but died young. Giacomo Beer, as he then was, at a very early age displayed signs of his musical genius; he was accustomed when but four years old to play popular airs on the piano, putting his own accompaniment. His first master in music was Lauska. While under his care a friend of the Beer family died and left his property to little Giacomo, on condition that he would add to his own name that of the testator, which was Meyer, and so Giacomo Beer became Giacomo Meyerbeer.

On the 14th of October, 1800, he performed on the pianoforte at a concert in Berlin. He studied for some time under Weber, and on leaving him he was for two years under the care of Abbé Vogler, at Darmstadt. When 17 years old the Grand Duke appointed him composer to the Court. His first operatic work was called "*La Fille de Jephté*," and was first performed at Munich, Meyerbeer being then 18 years old. In 1818 he produced "*Romilda e Constanza*," at Padua; 1819, "*Semiramide riconosciuta*"—which was written at Turin for the actress Caroline Bassi; 1820, "*Emma di Resburgo*," or "*Emma von Leicester*"; and on the 14th of November in the same year "*Margherita D'Anjou*" was produced at La Scala, Milan; 1822, March 12th, "*L'Esule di Granata*," at La Scala, Milan; 1823, "*La Porte de Brandebourg*," written in Berlin; 1824, December 26th, "*Crociato*"—performed at Venice with great success, Madame Meric Lalande and Lablache taking the principle rôles; 1846, September 19th, at Berlin, "*Struensee*," the libretto being written by his brother, Michel Beer; 1862, "*L'Africaine*," &c. Meyerbeer died at Paris, 1st of May, 1864.

L'AFRICAINNE.*

THE scene is laid in Portugal. Ines, the daughter of Don Diego, a member of the council, is in love with Vasco, a young naval officer, who is on a voyage with Diego. The news comes that the ship is wrecked, but Vasco, the sole survivor, returns, bringing with him two Indians, Selika and Nelusko, whom he has rescued from slavery in Africa. He applies to the council for aid to fit out an expedition to explore the land from which his slaves come, but the council refuses, and throws him into prison. This is mainly due to Don Pedro, the president, who is a suitor for the hand of Ines, and whom her father wishes her to marry.

The second Act opens in the prison of the Inquisition at Lisbon. Vasco and his two slaves are there. Selika the slave is in love with her master, Vasco, and Nelusko is as desperately in love with her. He is about to stab Vasco as he sleeps, but Selika wakes him in time to prevent the deed. Ines appears with a reprieve for Vasco. She has married Don Pedro, who comes with her. On her saying she must leave him for ever Vasco thinks she imagines that he has made Selika his wife, and to prove how little he cares for her he offers her to Ines; but she is the bride of Don Pedro, and bids him in anguish a last farewell. Don Pedro purchases the slaves from Vasco, and then tells him that he is about to start with Ines on the voyage of discovery Vasco was contemplating.

In the third Act Don Pedro is on board his ship with Ines. A sailor announces a ship in sight; a boat is lowered from it, and Vasco boards the ship of Don Pedro, and warns him of his danger, not only from the local storms, but also from the Indians who swarm on the seas in that neighbourhood. Vasco and Don Pedro quarrel, and Vasco is only saved from being shot by Don Pedro's orders through Selika, who threatens to kill Ines if Don Pedro does not spare his life. The Act ends with a storm and an invasion of the ship by Indians, who board it through the portholes.

In the next Act Vasco is a prisoner of the Indians. Selika, it appears, is their queen. Vasco is condemned, but is saved by Selika, who declares he is her husband. To this untruth

* First performed at Covent Garden in the year 1865.

Nelusko is obliged to swear, much against his will, inasmuch as it is to save his rival's life. Don Pedro and his crew have all been killed when the vessel was boarded, but Vasco was found chained in the hold, and was brought to shore alive. The Indian priests, while believing Selika's story of her marriage, insist upon its being repeated with Hindoo rites. Vasco consents, and the marriage ceremony is just ending when Vasco hears the voice of Ines in distress. She and her women are being led to be sacrificed. He is about to rush towards her as the curtain falls on the fourth Act.

In the last Act Selika talks with Ines. She has discovered that Ines and Vasco have met; but Ines assures her that Vasco is prepared to renounce her and be honourably the husband of Selika. Selika magnanimously offers Ines and Vasco their liberty. She asks Ines "What if I gave you liberty to follow him?" Ines replies that she could not marry him. Selika, seeing that her own death is necessary for Vasco's happiness, then makes a stern resolve. She sends Ines and Vasco to Vasco's ship, which is still in sight, and retires to the promontory on which the mancanilla tree grows—Nelusko is with her—she inhale the flowers of it; sees estatic visions as the fatal influence of the deadly tree creeps over her; and dies, forgiving Vasco, and happy in dying his bride. The faithful Nelusko shares her fate as the ship of Vasco disappears on the horizon.

DINORAH.*

In the village of Ploërmel, in Brittany, an annual fête is held, called "Pardon," on which occasion all the inhabitants make a pilgrimage to the chapel to offer worship to the Virgin. On the day of the anniversary, one year before the commencement of this opera, Hoel, a goatherd, and Dinorah, one of the village maidens, were to have been married, but on their way to the chapel a violent tempest laid waste the house and lands belonging to the father of the bride elect. Hoel, in despair at this catastrophe, is led to listen to the advice of an old villager called Tonick, who has the reputation of being a wizard. He promises if Hoel will for one whole year retire with him among the

* This opera, under the title "*Le Pardon de Ploërmel*," was produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris, 4th of April, 1859.

mountains they will succeed in getting the vast treasures which lie hid in the bowels of the earth, guarded by Gnomes and Korigans. He consents, and they leave the village. Dinorah, meantime, thinking her lover unfaithful, goes off her mind, and wanders about her native place accompanied by her pet goat Bellah, and always looking out for the return of Hoel.

The opera opens with a scene in the mountains; in the centre is the cottage of Corentino, a wandering musician; a crowd of goatherds and peasants are singing while making their way home after their day's work. Scarcely have the sounds died away than Bellah, the goat, runs across and disappears in the bushes; Dinorah follows, calling him, and at last, fancying she sees him asleep, wanders off again. The notes of a cornemuse are heard, and Corentino makes his way down to the cottage. Being an individual of somewhat weak intellect he is much afraid of the spirits said to haunt the mountains, and so continually plays upon his cornemuse to keep off unpleasant fears. While seated in his cottage Dinorah suddenly appears and, seizing him, makes him dance until both are quite exhausted and fall asleep. While in this state, Hoel, whose year of absence ends with midnight, appears. Knowing that he who first finds the treasure—according to the traditions of the old women—will die within a year, he has determined if possible to make, so to speak, a "cat's-paw" of the half-witted Corentino, particularly so as old Tonick has died. In this he so far succeeds that they start for the ravine where the treasure is supposed to be hid. Hardly have they left the cottage than they hear the tinkling of the bell attached to Bellah the goat's neck, and hurry off in that direction; Dinorah, unseen by them, doing the same.

The next scene is a birch-wood by night. Peasants, goatherds, &c., are seeking Dinorah, and on their leaving to find her she enters, and in the bright moonlight performs the well-known "*Aria dell' ombra*," (*Shadow Song*).

We are next taken to the ravine; it is close upon midnight. Hoel having gone off to find the entrance to it, Corentino is left alone. Suddenly Dinorah appears, singing the legend of the neighbourhood—that he who first finds the treasure will die within the year. Corentino wisely determines not to be let into the trap that his friend has laid for him, and on Hoel's return proposes that Dinorah shall be substituted. He recognizes her voice as that of his lady-love, but thinks she must be a phantom.

Corentino is trying to persuade her to undertake the adventure when Bellah, the goat, suddenly runs across the bridge over the ravine. Dinorah springs up, and throwing off her necklace, runs on to the bridge after it. Hoel, picking up the necklace, knows that it must be his love, and implores her to stop, but too late. A thunderbolt falls, and a flood of water bursts down the ravine, the bridge gives way, and, with a wild shriek, Dinorah is precipitated into the stream. Hoel, in despair, plunges in after her, and with this ends Act II.

The last Act opens with a rural scene on the following morning. Hoel having succeeded in saving Dinorah brings her in in a fainting state; she gradually recovers, and he, by gently leading her mind back to the past in his conversation, causes her reason to return. On the entrance of peasants she recognizes them all, and the opera ends with the procession of pilgrims, who lead the rejoined couple to the chapel to the nuptial ceremony.

LES HUGUENOTS.*

(THE HUGUENOTS.)

THE scene opens at Tourain—a room in the castle of Count de Nevers. A number of noblemen and gentlemen are present feasting; amongst others Raoul de Nangis, the leader of the Huguenots. In the midst of the revelry Nevers is called out to see a veiled lady, in whom Raoul recognizes Valentina, whom he met casually before, but whose name he does not know. Valentina is the daughter of Count St. Bris, the leader of the Catholics, and Marguerite de Valois, betrothed to Henri Quatre, having ascertained that Valentina has induced Nevers, whom she does not love, to give her up—he having been betrothed to her—by a ruse gets Raoul to Court, and endeavours to arrange a marriage between him and Valentina, with a view of putting

* Was first performed at Paris 21st of February, 1836. The late Mme. Theresa Tietjens first appeared before an English audience in the role of Valentina. She was of Hungarian extraction, born at Hamburg, 1831, where she made her début when only fifteen years old. She died at her residence in Finchley New Road, London, 3rd of October, 1877. and was buried on the 8th in Kensal Green Cemetery.

an end to the feud between the rival factions of Catholics and Huguenots. Her plan prospers until Raoul sees Valentina, and recognises in her the veiled lady he saw at Nevers' castle. He refuses the match, considering her character to be compromised, whereas, in reality, she went there only for the purpose of putting an end to her betrothal to Nevers.

The second Act opens with a scene on the banks of the Seine—a chapel in the background. The blended sounds of Huguenot hymns, Catholic litanies, and the coarse revelry of the citizens, introduce a scene in which Valentina overhears a plot by her father, St. Bris, to assassinate Raoul. By the assistance of Marcel, Raoul's characteristic friend and follower, she prevents her father's base design from being carried out. St. Bris and Raoul meet outside the chapel for mortal combat, when the friends of both appear in force, and there is about to be a broil, when Marguerita enters and stops the conflict. Valentina also appears. Marguerita explains to Raoul that to Valentina he owes his life, and that his suspicions of her conduct in Nevers' house were unfounded. To his mortification it is too late to mend matters, for Nevers steps from a boat and leads Valentina off in the midst of an assemblage of his friends come to witness the nuptials.

The third Act describes a secret visit of Raoul to Valentina. Her friends come in; she conceals him, and he overhears the plot to carry out the massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Eve concocted. Nevers refuses to join his friends, who place him under supervision. After a scene of intense passion between Raoul and Valentina, the former shewing her through the window what is passing in the street below, leaps to join his friends the Huguenots, and die with them.

The last Act opens with a ball in the Tour de Nesle, which is interrupted by the tolling of the great bell of St. Germain, and the guests hurry out of the room. The scene changes; first to a cemetery and church, wherein Raoul and Valentina witness the massacre of the Huguenot women at their prayers in the church; next to a street on the quays of Paris. Raoul is mortally wounded, and is supported by Valentina. The Catholics, headed by De Bris, come upon them. The soldiers fire at his command, and in his haste and zeal De Bris finds he has caused his daughter's death. The Queen passes on her way from a ball at the Louvre, and the curtain drops on an opera full of thrilling action and situation.

LE PROPHÈTE.*

THIS opera is based upon the history of John of Leyden, the prophet of the Anabaptists, who laid Germany waste in the name of God. According to their fanatical creed their mission was to establish a theocracy, a community of property, and something like a community of wives. John of Leyden declared God had appeared to him and appointed him King; and his coronation was carried out with great pomp. Out of these historical facts the opera is, with some variation, constructed.

The scene is Holland. Fides, an old woman, keeps an Inn near Dordrecht, and has a son John, the hero of the play. John is to marry Bertha, who is, however, a vassal of Count d'Oberthal, and has, therefore, to obtain his consent to her marriage. She goes with Fides to the Castle for that purpose; but Oberthal is smitten with her charms himself, and detains her. The Anabaptists, led by Zacharia, Jonas, and Mathison, protest and threaten, but the Count is inexorable. The three Anabaptists approach John with a view to enrolling him as their leader, and he half yields. Bertha escapes from her goalers and flies to John, who conceals her; but, on the Count's soldiers threatening his mother's life, he gives up Bertha, after a struggle with his feelings, and, half in religious ecstasy, half in desire for revenge upon Oberthal, becomes the Prophet of the Anabaptists.

The scene changes to their camp. Oberthal himself is brought in in the dark. He is sworn in as a member of the Anabaptist army—the tent being dark, and he thinking to aid his own escape by so doing—but a light is struck, and he is recognised. He is about to be killed when John, hearing from him that Bertha is still alive, and in Munster, spares his life for the time being, and leads his army to the taking of the town.

Fides has no notion that it is her son who is the Prophet: she only knows that he has deserted her for the Anabaptists. She meets Bertha in the streets of Munster when the Anabaptists are in possession. In their ignorance they mutually denounce the Prophet who has robbed them of John, and vow vengeance. John is crowned in state, but his mother recognizes him in the street. She is disowned by him, and hurried to a

* Was produced at the Opera, Paris, 16th of April, 1849.

dungeon. There Bertha appears prepared to set fire to gunpowder in the vaults to destroy her enemies. John comes there to see his mother. Bertha recognizes him, and, finding he is the Prophet, renounces him for his deeds of massacre, and ends her life by stabbing herself in his presence. John is overcome with remorse, and determines to fire the vault pointed out by Bertha, and involve in common destruction the cruel Anabaptists, Oberthal, and his enemies, who he hears from an officer have by treachery gained admittance to the Castle. He repairs to the Coronation banquet. Oberthal, the Bishop, nobles, and princes enter, but the gates close upon them. The walls fall in; the flames burst out; the mine is fired; Fides rushes in and dies with her son and his enemies and traitorous friends in the general ruin of the Castle.

ROBERT LE DIABLE.*

(ROBERT THE DEVIL.)

ROBERT the Devil, Duke of Normandy, is discovered with Bertram among his squires and attendants in a camp near Palermo, previous to a tournament about to be held by the Duke of Messina. Robert is in love with Isabella, Princess of Sicily, and, indeed, has just been rescued by his friend Bertram in an unsuccessful attempt to carry off the Princess. Robert is incognito, having been banished from his father's country for his outrageous conduct. A minstrel is brought into camp—a peasant from Normandy—Rambaldo, or Rambault—who sings in Robert's presence the popular and uncomplimentary ballad of "Robert the Devil." Robert in his anger discloses who he is,

* Meyerbeer finished this opera about the end of July, 1830, and it was first performed at the Opera House, Paris, in November, 1831, with the greatest success.

Guiseppe Mario, Marchese di Candia, the renowned tenor, made his début in this opera, 30th of November, 1833, at Paris. He was born at Turin, 1803. In the year 1830 he entered the Sardinian army as an officer. On resigning his commission he studied for two years in the Conservatoire, Paris, and made his début as above stated. Mario took his final farewell of the stage in London, on the 19th of July, 1871. He married Giulietta Grisi, the celebrated singer.

and only spares Rambaldo's life on the condition that the peasant brings his intended bride Alice to the camp. On her arrival Robert makes the discovery that she is his own foster-sister, and is the bearer of the last message of his mother to him. His better nature comes uppermost: he promises Alice that she shall marry Rambaldo, and by her advice gives her a letter to carry from him to the Princess Isabella, with whom he is deeply in love. Bertram, his friend and evil genius, then leads him off to gamble with the other knights. Robert plays desperately, staking and losing everything.

The Princess Isabella is in love with Robert, but her father has disposed of her hand to the Prince of Grenada, who challenges Robert to fight. Bertram by a ruse has induced Robert to go to a wood, where he expects to meet his rival. The trumpets, meanwhile, sound in the lists, and, to the chagrin of Isabella, Robert is not there to fight for her.

The scene changes to the rocks of St. Irene. Bertram comes to communicate with the evil spirits. He unveils the fact that he is Robert's father, supposed to be dead, but still living under a compact with the powers of Evil, which compels him to find another victim that very night; otherwise, he dies. The victim he is preparing is his own son Robert. With this view he induces him to seek the aid he requires wherewith to foil his rival from the powers below, and for that purpose to visit the vaults of the church of St. Rosalie. There the spirits of the wicked nuns are invoked by Bertram, and bid by him to allure Robert to his destruction. Under their temptation and auspices Robert carries off the mystic branch of cyprus which is to be his talisman, and rushes from the weird scene. With the talisman he charms to sleep the attendants of Isabella, and discloses himself to her in the Palace. Again his better nature conquers, and, breaking the talisman, he exposes himself to the mercy of the soldiers of the King of Sicily, whom he had before offended. The charm is broken, and they make him prisoner in the Palace.

The last scene finds Robert in the cloisters of a church—a place of refuge. He has again been rescued by Bertram, and has also met his rival and been defeated. Bertram follows him, and, as a last resort, appeals to him to sacrifice himself for the sake of his father, and sign a compact with the powers below for his sake. Robert, with a noble impulse, offers to do so, but Alice appears on the scene to deter him, tendering the will of his dead mother as a counter impulse which shall keep him in

the right path. He wavers; the clock strikes twelve; the time is past for saving his father, who sinks into regions below, and a chorus of thanksgiving that Robert's soul is saved closes the last Act.

LA STELLA DEL NORD.*

(L'ETOILE DU NORD.)

THE plot of this opera is founded upon certain incidents in the life of Peter, called "The Great," Czar of Russia, who was born 30th of May, 1672. The facts are not quite correct, but differ so little from the true story that it is of no great importance. Peter certainly did work as a ship's carpenter in the dockyards, but at Amsterdam, and not on the Gulf of Finland. He also married one Catherine Aloxowna, widow of a Swedish officer, a person of humble origin, but he met her first at the house of Prince Menzikoff, to whom she was housekeeper, and not selling dantzic to the workmen in the docks, as asserted in the opera.

The scene opens in the dockyards near Wyborg, on the Gulf of Finland; the hour is midday, and the men, having ceased their work to have their dinners, are lying about. Danilowitz, the pastry cook, is selling tarts, &c., to them. They joke Peter, or Pietro Micaelof as he calls himself, about being in love with Catterina, a girl who sells dantzic to them, and who shortly before had saved his life; also how he spends his time in playing the flute with Georgio Savoronsky, her brother, only to see the sister. Before returning to work they drink to the health of Charles the Twelfth of Finland and downfall to Russia, except Danilowitz and Peter, who are only saved from immediate vengeance by the bell ringing, when all rush off to their work except the two Muscovites. They determine shortly to leave for their native land together. Georgio then enters and tells Peter that his sister has gone to plead his cause with Rainoldo, the father of his lady-love Prascovia; and while they are talking Catterina herself enters and tells them she has been successful. Both Peter and Catterina possess hot tempers and strong wills, and of

* Was produced at Paris, 16th of February, 1854, with great success..

necessity are continually squabbling. She tells him he can only win her love by acts of bravery on the field of battle, and he leaves to join the army. The Cossacks, having made a raid upon the village, impose a conscription, and Georgio is ordered off to the war; but Catterina, wishing to follow her lover Peter, dresses in male attire, and goes as Georgio's substitute. The first Act ends with the marriage of Georgio and Prascovia and the departure of the heroine for the camp.

The scene of the next Act is laid in the Russian camp; Catterina being there among the recruits. Gritzendo, a corporal, shows her some papers which he cannot read, but which contain a plan of revolt against the Czar; these she keeps. She is then told off as sentinel over a tent that has been set apart for two great officers who are expected, and who turn out to be Peter, disguised as a captain, and Tcheremetieff, a general. They are accompanied by two aides-de-camp and Danilowitz, formerly pastry cook, now colonel. Peter, knowing the disturbed state the troops are in, sends his aides-de-camp off for his Tartar Grenadiers, and then sits down to drink and make merry in the tent with Danilowitz and two vivandieres. Catterina, peeping through the tent, sees all that passes, and is so disgusted that she determines to throw him over for ever. On the corporal catching her peeping and ordering her off the watch, she slaps his face, and being brought before Peter for insubordination she declares herself to him; but he is too drunk to recognise her, and orders her to be shot. She manages to escape by leaping into a river, after having first written a letter to Peter, throwing him over, and sending the papers containing the plan of the revolt, advising him to acquaint the Czar of it and so make his fortune; these are handed to him by Gritzenko. The troops are on the point of revolting, when Peter, after addressing them, discovers himself to them as their Emperor; on which all swear to fight and, if needs be, die for him. The second Act ends with the entrance of Tartar Grenadiers, whom Peter had sent for.

The scene of the last Act is a room in the Palace of the Czar. Peter is bewailing to Danilowitz the loss of Catterina, when Prascovia and Georgio are announced. Peter, on leaving, orders them to be shown in. Georgio shows Gritzenko his regimental papers, and declares he has come to take the place of his substitute—i.e., Catterina—on which he is led off to be shot for desertion. Peter then enters in great agitation, having heard the voice of Catterina singing in the Palace, and Dani-

lowitz tells him that he has at length found her, but that her mind is quite gone. Peter orders her to be brought in; she enters, singing of the old Finland days. The doors at the back of the room are thrown open, displaying the house of Catterina, the dockyard, and various workmen, just as in Scene I. The workmen surround Catterina, asking her for some dantzic. Danilowitz enters, crying tarts to sell; also Georgio and Prascovia, all dressed as in Scene I. Anon the sound of Peter's flute is heard playing one of the tunes he used to practice with Georgio. Gradually Catterina's senses return, and, as she hangs on Peter's neck, the chorus sing "Long life to the Empress!"

MOZART.

JOHANN CHRYSOSTOMUS WOLFGANG MOZART, was son of Johann Leopold Mozart, Master of the Chapel at Salzburg, and grandson of a bookbinder at Augsburg. He was born at Salzburg, 27th of January, 1756. His mother was one Maria Anna Pertl. When but three years old, Mozart would pick out on the harpsichord—the pianoforte of that day—musical intervals, such as thirds, sixths, &c.; and when he got them correct would show the greatest delight. At four years old he composed some minuets and other small pieces, which his father copied out. For three years his father travelled about the continent with him and his sister, Maria Anna Mozart,—born 29th of August, 1751—giving musical entertainments, and everywhere the little Mozart won overwhelming applause for his astonishing performance on the harpsichord. In 1764 they visited England, and played before King George III; Mozart being then aged eight years.

In 1766 Mozart commenced studying composition under his father at Salzburg. His first dramatic production was a small opera, entitled “Bastien et Bastienne,” which was written in the month of January, 1768. 1770, “Mithridate,” composed at Milan; 1772, October, “Lucio Silla,” at Milan; 1773, “Zaïde,” at Venice; 1774, “La Finta Giardiniera,” at Munich; the same year he was appointed Master of the Chapel at Salzburg. 1778, July 4th, his mother died. 1781, January 29th, “Idomeneo”—written at Venice for the theatre at Munich; 1785, “Il Villanella rapita”; 1786, “Der Schauspiel Director”—at Schoenbrunn; 1790, January 26th, “Cosi fan tutti,” at Vienna; 1791, “La clemenza di Tito,” at Prague. Mozart died 5th of December, 1791, aged under 36 years. He married, 4th of August, 1782, Constance Weber, a well-known pianist, and sister of Madame Lange, the celebrated singer. She married, secondly, a counsellor of Nissen, and died at Salzburg, 6th of March, 1842. Mozart had two sons, Charles, born 1784, and Wolfgang Amadeus, born 26th of July, 1791, just three months before his father’s death. The latter became a pianist of some note, and died 30th of July, 1844.

IL FLAUTO MAGICO.*

OR

DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE.

THIS opera deals with the mysterious worship of Isis, a god of the ancient Egyptians. Tamino, an Egyptian prince, being chased by a magic serpent, falls unconscious upon the ground. Three veiled ladies—the attendants of Astrifiammante, the wicked Queen of the Night—kill the serpent. They show Tamino the portrait of Pamina, daughter of the Queen, whom Sarastro, High Priest of Isis, has carried away from her mother to bring her up in the paths of virtue, and persuade Tamino, accompanied by Papageno, a talkative, and untruthful birdcatcher, to undertake to return her to her mother; for this purpose they appoint three boys as attendants to guide them to the place where Pamina is held prisoner; to Tamino they give a golden flute which, when played, will protect him from all dangers, and to Papageno another flute and bells for the same purpose.

Pamina has been placed by Sarastro under the care of Monostatos, a moor, who is the head of his slaves. He is continually pressing his love upon Pamina, and because she does not return it he illuses her. Papageno manages to get an interview with her, and tells her of Tamino. She is about to run away with him, when she is stopped by Sarastro; to whom she confesses the truth, and tells him about Monostatos, whom he orders to receive 77 stripes from the bastinado. On this occasion Pamina and Tamino meet for the first time; and Sarastro promises that they shall be united if they will undergo certain mysterious trials; and they are accordingly conveyed to the Temple of Isis.

The first test put upon Tamino is to be parted from his love, Pamina, and he is ordered to keep silence. The three veiled ladies appear to him and Papageno, and try to persuade them that Sarastro merely intends taking their lives. Papageno is much frightened, but Tamino remains true to his vows of silence. Monostatos, nothing daunted by his bastinadoing, attempts to kiss Pamina as she is sleeping in a garden, but is

* Was finished in July, 1791, and played for the first time the 30th of September following at Vienna.

prevented by the sudden appearance of the Queen of the Night, who awakens her daughter, and tells her her only way of winning Tamino is to kill Sarastro, and seize on the gold symbol, and so leaves her. Pamina is horrified, when Monostatos comes in, who offers in return for her love to do the deed for her: on her refusing he is about to stab her, but Sarastro, the priest, appears, who drives him from his service. Monostatos leaves, and joins the service of the Queen of the Night.

Tamino is again tested, by Pamina appearing to him and using the most affectionate terms, but he withstands the trial, and keeps silence. He is then led off to undergo further tests. Papageno wishes for a wife and is promised, on certain conditions, one just like himself, whose name shall be Papagena. These conditions he fails in keeping, so an old woman appears to him, who makes violent love; he promises to be a good husband to her, when she is suddenly transformed into Papagena. On this he rushes to embrace her, but the earth opens and he sinks into an abyss. Pamina, despairing of ever seeing Tamino again, attempts to take her own life with the dagger given her by her mother, but is prevented by the three boy-attendants on Tamino.

The next scene is a great mountain, at the foot of which is a cavern with a grating in front, from which issue flames. Tamino is told that if he dare pass through he will be able to devote himself to the mysteries of Isis; he and Pamina enter, they embrace, and hand-in-hand pass through the flames unscathed. The mountain changes to another, from which rushes a violent torrent, into which Tamino and Pamina enter, but are swept away from sight. The mountain opens, and they are discovered in a temple returning thanks. Papageno has, to his great joy, Papagena restored to him.

In the last scene the Queen of the Night, attended by the three veiled ladies and Monostatos, rises from the earth. They are plotting the destruction of Sarastro when, amidst the rolls of thunder, the scene changes to the Temple of the Sun. The Queen's sceptre having been broken, she and her attendants sink into the earth. Sarastro is seen seated on the throne, and Tamino and Pamina at the foot of it, attired in the habits of the initiated, are surrounded by a band of priests, who, in chorus, sing to the glory of their faithfulness through the trials imposed upon them.

DON GIOVANNI.*

THIS opera depicts the career of Don Giovanni, a licentious nobleman, who had deserted his wife, Elvira, and given himself up to a life of pleasure. In all his adventures he is assisted by his servant, Leporello, who, nevertheless, is shocked with his master's conduct.

In the first Act, Don Giovanni having first insulted Donna Anna, then kills in a duel her father, the commandant of Seville, and escapes unrecognized. Don Ottavio, the lover of Donna Anna, vows to be revenged upon the unknown assassin. His next adventure is in a garden. Overhearing a lady deplore the unfaithfulness of her lover, he advances to offer consolation, when he discovers her to be his neglected wife, Elvira, who, with scorn, orders him to leave her; this he does, telling his servant, Leporello, to explain matters to her, who, in the song "*Madamina, il Catalogo*," gives a long list of all her husband's "*affaires de cœurs*." Don Giovanni next becomes enamoured of a peasant girl called Zerlina, who is betrothed to Masetto; but while making love to her his wife suddenly appears upon the scene and warns the girl against him.

In the next scene Don Ottavio and Donna Anna beg Don Giovanni to assist them in tracking the assassin of the commandant. He is promising to help them when his wife enters and lays bare his dissolute life to them; Donna Anna then, for the first time, suspects him of being the insulter of herself and the murderer of her father. Don Giovanni next gives a large ball which Don Ottavio, Donna Anna, and Donna Elvira attend, masked. During one of the dances Don Giovanni succeeds in enticing Zerlina to enter a neighbouring apartment with him, but her screams for help attracting the dancers, they burst open the door, and Donna Elvira, unmasking, again exposes his conduct to all his guests: with this scene ends Act I.

In the second Act Don Giovanni, being enamoured of his wife's maid, changes dresses with Leporello, thinking thus equipped the better to carry out the adventure. Masetto, mean-

* "Don Giovanni" was produced at Prague, 4th of November, 1787, with the greatest success. At Vienna it was not quite so well received. It is related that Haydn, on being asked his opinion of this opera, said, "I am not capable of judging: all that I know is, that Mozart is certainly the greatest composer now in existence."

while, having collected together a band of peasants, has determined to kill Don Giovanni, but he escapes, owing to his being mistaken for Leporello, and, by a ruse, succeeds in disarming Masetto, and in giving him a good beating; Leporello, on the other hand, is nearly killed by Don Ottavio, through being mistaken for Don Giovanni.

The next scene is in the cemetery, where is a statue to the memory of the late commandant. Don Giovanni and Leporello are arranging further adventures, when the statue speaks, warning Don Giovanni that his career must end with daybreak. He (Don Giovanni) nothing abashed, asks, in joke, the statue to sup with him, the invitation is accepted.

The last scene is the banqueting-hall. Donna Elvira begs Don Giovanni to give up his wild life and return to her; he scoffs at the notion; she is leaving him broken-hearted when the statue appears, who, refusing to eat, invites Don Giovanni to sup with him. He accepts, the statue then seizes his hand. an icy chill passes through the frame of Don Giovanni, and he at length comprehends the awful doom in store for him.

LE NOZZE DI FIGARO.*

THIS opera is founded upon Beaumarchais' comedy "Les Folies d'un jour." It is, so to speak, a collection of ridiculous *dénouements*, occasioned by the gallantries of the Count Almaviva and his household. The main feature of the opera is the intrigue between the Count and his wife's maid, Susanna, who is betrothed to Figaro, the Count's valet. Cherubino, the page, having been caught by his master closeted with Barbarina, comes to tell Susanna of his misfortune; the footsteps of the Count outside disturbs their interview, so Cherubino hides behind a large arm-chair. The Count then enters, and is explaining to Susanna how he has been made ambassador to the English Court, when Basilio, an attendant of the Count's, is heard outside. Wishing to test what Basilio would say of him behind his back, the Count determines to hide. Susanna so manages

* "Le Nozze di Figaro" was written by order of the Emperor Joseph II, in the year 1786.

matters that as the Count hides behind the chair, Cherubino creeps round from the back and curls himself up in the chair; she then throws a dress over him. On Basilio telling Susanna that all the world know that Cherubino is in love with his mistress, the Countess, the Count rises from behind the chair in a great rage and vows he will send the page away; Susanna pleads for him on account of his youth, but the Count won't hear of it, and then describes how he found the young rascal hid under the table in Barbarina's room. Suiting the action to the word, he lifts the dress from the chair, and to his astonishment again discloses the hiding Cherubino.

The final *dénouement* is caused by the Countess changing dresses with Susanna, and making an assignation with the Count in the garden; he is completely taken in; but on seeing Figaro making love to the sham Countess he is so incensed with jealousy that he calls for assistance, to expose his wife's infidelity, only to call the laugh of all against himself. He then becomes very repentant, and, on promising to turn over a new leaf, is forgiven by his wife.

There is also a sort of underplot running through the piece. Bastolo, an old man, is determined to marry Susanna, who has already rejected him, and Marcellina, an old woman, wishes to lead the unwilling Figaro to the altar, but their plans fail on Marcellina finding that Figaro is her son by a mark upon his arm, and declaring Bastolo to be his father.

IL SERAGLIO.*

THE Lady Constance and her maid Blonda, having been taken prisoners, are sold as slaves to the Bashaw Selim, who falls desperately in love with Constance, but she in no way returns his affection, and makes a present of Blonda to his factotum, Osmin; meantime Belmont, son of Latades, the Spanish Governor of Kan, and the affianced lover of Constance, accompanied by Pedrillo, his servant, determine to effect the escape of the Lady Constance and her maid. Belmont and Pedrillo manage,

* This opera was first performed at Vienna, 13th of July, 1782.

by pretending to be the one an architect, the other a great gardener, to get into the service of the Bashaw, and though trusted by him, they are hated by Osmin, who is continually vowing vengeance upon them. They succeed in arranging with Constance and Blonda to be under the former's window at midnight with a ladder, Belmont having a ship in the harbour ready to carry them off. Pedrillo then makes Osmin, although a Mahometan, very drunk, and puts him to bed; they are in the very act of stealing away when Osmin, now somewhat recovered from his unusual libations, enters, calls the guard, and they are all taken prisoners and brought before Selim. He threatens to have them tortured, but finally relenting, allows them to depart, much to the discomfort of Osmin, who, after giving vent to his feelings—saying what he would do to them were he Bashaw—makes his exit, raging.

PALADILHE.

SUZANNE.*

THE opening scene of this opera represents an English hop-garden in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, in which the pickers are singing the praises of the national beverage. Their excitement is increased on the announcement by Eva of the approach of the London mail with the news of the issue of the great boat race. George, the leading spirit of the student, accompanied by Barnett, Harry and others, appears on the scene and proclaims the victory of the Light Blue. After general rejoicing, and having recognised in Eva the waitress at the "Three Cranes," in Cambridge, now taking her holiday in the county, George informs the company that they are upon his uncle, Lord Dalton's estate, to which he is heir, and invites them all to stay a day. He explains how his uncle complies with all his requests but never sees him. Bob, an awkward lad, is sent by Lord Dalton as George's servant, in compliance with his request for an attendant. A terrible storm breaks upon the scene, and causes general confusion. Richard, a scholar travelling back to Cambridge on foot, shelters under a tree, and when the storm has abated meets his fellow student George and relates, after some questioning, his having passed a remarkably pretty girl on the road whom he had not the courage to address. They agree to join the other students, Richard, however, reluctantly, and George leads the way by the bridge over the stream which crosses the scene. Weakened by the flood, it gives way just as

* This opera was first produced at L'Opéra-Comique, Paris, on the 30th of December, 1878. M. M. Lockroy and Cormon, the writers of the libretto, have taken some liberties with both English manners and scenery, as for instance hop gardens between London and Cambridge, and the habits and customs of undergraduates, &c.

George reaches the opposite bank and leaves Richard no possibility of crossing, except by the mill some distance down stream. As Richard turns to go he sees Suzanne, the pretty girl whom he had met an hour before, coming that way, and having at first concealed himself, salutes her and enters into conversation. She tells him that she has been brought up to country pursuits by her relations, her parents having died in her infancy, but that she has always had a craving for knowledge and a passion for reading. Having preserved some leaves of Shakespeare, and refused to give them up to light the fire, she was maltreated by her relatives, and had left them without any definite goal. After sharing some lunch they agree to journey together to Cambridge, and stand by one another as brother and sister.

The second Act takes place at the "Three Cranes," at Cambridge. Suzanne is discovered dressed as a student, having passed for the last three months as Richard's cousin, under the name of Claudius and entered the university. She lodges at the Inn. Eva, the waitress, reproaches her for studying too hard and begs Richard to scold her. During the ensuing conversation Suzanne is much alarmed by the amorous overtures of Eva who takes her for a man. They are just going off to lecture when they are stopped by George and other students who declare that Richard and Claudius must join in their Christmas-eve celebrations. George appears to have his suspicions about Claudius, but they soon all begin, together with their Inspector Peperey, to make preparations for the feast. Richard, left alone again with Suzanne, can contain his feelings no longer and confesses his love for her. They are surprised by George. Suzanne sees that she is discovered and resolves to fly, therefore writes a note of adieu to Richard and confides it to Eva on the understanding that it is to be delivered on the following day. The note however falls into Richard's hands in time for him to arrive just at the moment when Suzanne is leaving, now in her female character. He attempts to restrain her but the whole company rush in and discover the proceeding. They allow Suzanne to depart amidst much insulting rillery, but prevent Richard from following her.

The third and last Act opens in the decorated salon of Suzanne, now the first actress of the day, to whom George, now Lord Dalton, and other gentlemen amongst whom is Pom-pousness, a great financier, are come to pay their compliments.

To cut short the boasting of the latter, they induce him to drive his horses for a wager. Meanwhile Suzanne enters reading Shakespeare and laughing at the character of Falstaff in spite of herself. The gentlemen return, Pompousness having lost his wager. Suzanne refuses to accept two large pearls offered by Pompousness, who in conversation relates the gallant exploits of a certain young naval officer in the Indies, and adds the romance which is reputed to be attached to his history, which enables Suzanne to recognise in him the man who had been the cause of her disgrace, namely Richard. Suzanne has still bitter feelings against Richard, and promises, in the event of her breaking her determination never to marry, to accept Dalton's offer of his name. Numerous visitors arrive to offer congratulations on the performance of the night before and all repair together to lunch. Richard enters by the terrace and meets Eva (now Mrs. Peperley) who has come to visit Suzanne. They are soon joined by Suzanne who is horror-stricken at seeing Richard and requests him to leave her for ever in spite of his ardent protestations to which she is deaf. She leaves Richard under the impression that she loves George who has been her friend in her troubles, so that when these two confront one another they quarrel and repair to the garden to settle the matter definitely. Peperley, who has been hiding in the garden seeking shelter from a mob to whom he had been preaching, rushes in and gives the alarm. Suzanne faints but her fears are soothed by the appearance of George and Richard, the latter wounded in the arm. George quickly notices how Suzanne is affected by Richard's appearance and extracts from her the confession that she loves him, whereupon he nobly releases her from her engagement to himself which she would otherwise have kept, and resigns her to Richard.

RICCI.

LUIGI RICCI was born at Naples in the year 1808. He was admitted, together with his brother Frederico, to the Conservatoire of San Pietro a Majella at Naples. In the year 1828 he wrote his first opera, entitled "*L'Impresario in angustie*," which was performed in the small theatre attached to the Conservatory. In the same year he produced "*L'Orfanello di Ginevra*" at the Teatro Valle at Rome. The two brothers then wrote several operas together, but these proving unsuccessful they parted company. In 1831 Luigi Ricci produced "*Annibale in Torino*" at Turin, and "*Chiara di Rosenberg*" at Milan; 1832, "*La Neva*" at Milan, and "*Il Diavolo condannato a prender moglie*" at Naples; 1833, "*Il Nuovo Figaro*" at Parma, and "*La Gabbia de' Mutti*" at Rome and Milan; 1834, "*I due Sergenti*"—"Un' Avventura di Scaramuccia" at Milan, and "*Erano due, or son tre*" at Turin; 1835, "*Aladino*" at Naples, "*La Dama Colonello*" at Naples, and "*Maria di Montalban*" at Milan; 1836, "*La Serva et L'Ussaro*" and "*Il Disertore Suizero*," which latter was written by the brothers conjointly and performed at Naples. This same year he wrote the work he is best known by "*Crispino e la Comare*"; 1837, "*Chi dura Vince*," produced at Milan, which was the last opera he wrote. He was made Master of the Chapel of the Cathedral and director of the music at the Theatre in Trieste in the year 1837. In the spring of 1857 he became deranged and was placed under medical care at Prague, where he died the 1st of January, 1860.

CRISPINO E LA COMARE.*

(THE COBBLER AND THE FAIRY.)

THE scene is laid in Venice. The principal character is Crispino, a cobbler in very poor circumstances, whose wife, Annetta, endeavours to earn a little money by selling ballads in

the streets. In the city lives an old Sicilian miser who is Crispino's landlord, and who is on the point of putting in a distress for the rent. Crispino is in despair, and goes to a well with the intention of drowning himself, and so escaping from his troubles. There he meets the fairy "La Comare," who dissuades him from his rash purpose, gives him money, and tells him to set up as a doctor; in which case, whenever she appears to him when attending a patient he may rely upon it the patient will die; but if she does not appear he may safely prescribe and predict recovery. To the amusement of his neighbours, especially of the local doctors, he assumes his new vocation. His first case is a complete success. He cures a mason given up by the *savants*. But the miser has a ward, his niece Lisetta, who falls ill. Crispino is called in and the fairy appears; not, however, at the bedside of the niece, but at the feet of her guardian. Crispino confidently predicts her recovery and the death of her guardian, both of which events take place, and Lisetta is thus enabled to marry her lover, a Tuscan nobleman, upon whose suit the miser had previously frowned, being himself in love with her handsome marriage portion.

Crispino grows rich, but also miserly, and does not behave well to his family. He is even rude to the fairy, who, to punish him, conjures his spirit away to her home below the earth, insists upon his making a will in favour of his family, and so frightens him out of his wits that he promises to reform, on which she allows his spirit to re-enter the body of Crispino, over which his relations have been weeping, thinking he was in a fit. A family reconciliation takes place, and for all the opera tells us, Crispino and his friends lived happily over afterwards.

Great fun is made of the doctors and their dog-latin prescriptions in the course of the piece.

ROSSINI.

GIOACCHINO ANTONIO ROSSINI was born on the 29th of February, 1792, at Pesara in Italy. His father, Guiseppe Rossini, was a player upon the horn, and his mother, Anna Guidarini, a chorus singer in the opera. The Rossinis, father and mother, were accustomed during the opera season to go wherever they could get work, and when that was over would return to Pesara, living on the money they had made until the following season. By this means their boy Gioacchino, who at an early age showed great talent for music, had a continuous change and variety of masters.

Musicians, like doctors, and other members of scientific professions, almost invariably disagree, or, shall I say, hold different opinions, and so young Rossini made but small progress in the science of music during his early childhood. In the year 1804 his parents placed him definitely under the tuition of Angelo Tesei, at Bologna, who taught him the piano and singing, he having a very fine voice as a boy. On the 20th of March, 1807, Rossini was admitted as student to the Lyceum of the same town, where he received lessons in composition, &c., from Mattei.

His first operatic production was entitled "*La Cambiale di matrimonio*," which was played at the Theatre San Mosè, at Venice, in the autumn of the year 1810. He married, 15th of March, 1822, at Castenaso near Bologna, Isabella Angela Colbran, prima donna of the Theatre Royal, Naples, and daughter of Gianni Colbran, musician of the chapel to the King of Spain. She died at Bologna, 7th of October, 1845.

Rossini was Associate of the Académie des Beaux-Arts of Paris, and honorary member of a great number of academies and musical societies. He was also one of the thirty foreign members of the Order of Merit of Prussia, and Commander and Knight of many other Orders. He died the 13th of November, 1868, having attained to the ripe age of 76 years, and was buried the 21st of November, at Paris.

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA.*

(THE BARBER OF SEVILLE.)

THE scene opens in a street at Seville. It is dawn, and the Count Almaviva, with musicians, serenades his mistress, Rosina, the ward of Doctor Bartolo. Figaro appears upon the scene. He is the barber and factotum of the town, who busies himself in everybody's affairs. The Count has just divulged to him his passion for Rosina, when she appears upon the balcony. Bartolo, her guardian, also steps out, but by a ruse Rosina gets rid of him, and succeeds in dropping a note to the Count in the street. The Count then endeavours to obtain an interview with Rosina in the disguise of a drunken soldier. He forces himself into Bartolo's home, claiming lodging under an order for billet, but Bartolo sends for the police and gives him into custody.

In the second Act the Count enters Bartolo's home as a music-master, affirming that Dr. Basilio, Rosina's music-master is ill and has sent him, his pupil, in his place. Bartolo is suspicious of him, but the Count gives him Rosina's letter to himself, suggesting that Rosina should be made to believe it was written by another lady to the Count, and so he is induced to give him up. The barber also comes in to shave the Doctor, and succeeds in getting from him the key of the balcony, with a view to the elopement of Rosina with the Count. Basilio, however,

* Was written for the Theatre Argentina, Rome, where it was produced in the year 1816.

Maria Felicita Malibran made her first appearance at the King's Theatre, London, on the 17th of June, 1825, in the rôle of "Rosina," which was attended with such success that she was engaged for the remainder of the season—six weeks—at the salary of £500. She was born, 24th of March, 1808, in the Rue de Marivaux, Paris. Her father, Manuel Garcia, was by extraction a Spanish Jew, and a well-known actor and singer in Madrid. M. Panzeron instructed her in singing, and Hérold, the composer, taught her the pianoforte. On the 23rd of March, 1826, she married, at New York, M. François Eugène Malibran, a French merchant, who had settled in that city, from whom, in 1835, she obtained a divorce, and, on the 29th of March in the same year, married secondly M. de Bériot. When at Manchester in April, 1836, she had a fall from horseback, which caused some internal derangement, from which she never recovered, and died 23rd of September following. She was buried at Manchester, but her husband, M. de Bériot, shortly afterwards conveyed her remains to Brussels.

arrives, and is with some difficulty got rid of, since he scarcely believes the assurances of the Count, Figaro, and Rosina that he is looking very ill. The barber then shaves Bartolo, the Count and Rosina meanwhile laying their plans under cover of the music lesson. But the Doctor finds them out, and Basilio again appears, and assures the Doctor he knows nothing of any pupil, and that he never sent the Count to take his place. Bartolo is very angry, for he himself means to marry his ward, Rosina, and has taken Basilio into his confidence on the subject. He craftily uses the letter the Count gave him to create suspicion in her mind, assures her she is deceived, and induces her to consent to marry her guardian himself.

Figaro and the Count come, as arranged, to the verandah by night to take Rosina with them, but she repulses the Count. The mistake, however, is explained, and they prepare to descend by the ladder, to the air "Zitti Zitti," when it is discovered that some one has removed the ladder. Basilio comes in with a notary and marriage contract, and under the joint persuasion of a ring given to him by the Count, and a threat of a bullet if he refuses, he stands by while the Count and Rosina sign the contract. The Doctor Bartolo arrives with the police just too late to prevent the Count's success, but becomes rapidly reconciled to the inevitable, and gives them his blessing.

LA CENERENTOLA.*

(CINDERELLA.)

THIS opera is founded on the old fairy story of "Cinderella," and is not the first opera which has that origin, for it was preceded by "*Féerie Cendrillon*," composed by Isouard, which in its main outlines the librettist of this version has followed.

The scene opens in the castle of the Baron Don Magnifico. Clorinda is trying a dancing step, Thisbe is arranging flowers, and Cinderella is blowing the fire with a pair of bellows to make the coffee-pot boil. Alidoro enters as an old man begging. Clorinda and Thisbe order him roughly to be gone, but Cinde-

* Was first produced at the Teatro Valle in Rome during the Carnival in the year 1817.

rella gives him some coffee and a roll, at which her sisters are very angry. Cavaliers appear on the scene, to announce that Prince Ramiro, who is about to choose as his wife the most beautiful among the ladies who come to his court, is coming to see them. Clorinda and Thisbe prepare themselves for the visit, making Cinderella act as their maid during the preparations.

Then comes the Prince disguised as a squire, and he, of course, falls in love with Cinderella at first sight. Shortly afterwards Dandini enters dressed as the Prince. Magnifico and his two daughters are delighted. Ramiro meanwhile is gazing intently on Cinderella. She pleads to be allowed to go to the ball at the Prince's palace for only half an hour, but Magnifico is very angry and will not permit it. They all leave for the dance but Cinderella. Alidoro then comes in dressed as a pilgrim. He brings with him jewels and dresses for her, and promises to take her in the Prince's carriage.

The scene changes to the ball-room. Dandini is still playing Prince. Clorinda and Thisbe are putting forward all their charms to enslave him. Cinderella appears as an unknown lady. Dandini dances with her, and Ramiro overhears her telling him that she loves his squire (meaning Ramiro himself). Ramiro steps forward and asks her to marry him. She tells him to learn more about her first, and gives him a bracelet, the fellow to which she says she will be wearing when he finds her again. Magnifico and his daughters get impatient at the supposed Prince not having made his choice, and deliberately ask Dandini to do so. He then explains to them that he is only the Prince's valet, and that he has been tricking them.

The next scene finds Cinderella again at home. Her sisters and Magnifico return from the dance in not a very good temper. Ere long a storm is heard raging, and Ramiro, now in his real character, enters, with his valet Dandini, to take shelter. The Prince recognises Cinderella by the bracelet, and marries her. The sisters and Magnifico are furious at first, but at length are reconciled to their fate, and in the last scene are forgiven by Cinderella, now the Princess, who embraces them, and all ends happily.

LA DONNA DEL LAGO.*

(THE LADY OF THE LAKE.)

THE scene is laid in Scotland, near Stirling. In the valley lies Loch Katrine, and on the lake in a boat rides Ellen, the Lady of the Lake, daughter of Douglas of Angus, a rebellious Scottish chieftain. Presently James V, King of Scotland, disguised as Hubert, Knight of Snowdon, meets her. He says he has lost his way while hunting, and she offers him an asylum at her home. The King discovers to his alarm that he is in the home of the rebel chieftain, Douglas, and quickly leaves, but not before he has declared his sudden attachment to Ellen. Ellen, however, is deeply in love with Malcolm Græme, although her father wishes her to marry Roderick Dhu, a brother chieftain, who is also in rebellion against the King. Malcolm and Roderick are about to quarrel about her when the King's forces are seen approaching, and all private wrongs are hushed until the enemy is defeated. The first Act closes with the march of the clans to meet the enemy.

In the second Act the King in disguise again seeks out Ellen and professes his love. She tells him she loves another, and he then generously gives her a ring, on showing which to the King, he tells her she will be able to obtain any favour she requires. They are interrupted by Roderick Dhu, and he and the King quarrel and leave to fight a single combat. Meanwhile the rebel forces are routed. Roderick falls, and Ellen hastens to the King to save her father and Malcolm. The King holds a tournament to celebrate his victory. To it the old chieftain, Douglas, repairs in disguise, and as an unknown knight carries off the prizes. He then sues for mercy for his daughter and his followers; but his daughter is there to save him with the ring. The King forgives him and joins the hands of Malcolm and Ellen, and all ends well.

* Was produced at the Teatro S. Carlo, Naples, in the autumn of the year 1819.

LA GAZZA LADRA.*

(THE THIEVING MAGPIE.)

FABRICIO's household is busy preparing to welcome his son Gianetto home, who has been at the wars. Among the most busy of the family party is the magpie in the cage, which takes a prominent part in the conversation, suggesting Minnetta's name as the future bride of Gianetto most opportunely. Minnetta's father is away at the war, and her mother is dead, so she is for the present a servant at Fabricio's. Gianetto at last arrives, and a grand family repast takes place, at which drinking-songs are freely introduced. Fernando, Minnetta's father, now returns, but he is a fugitive from martial law—he has quarrelled and drawn his sword on his superior officer, and has been condemned to be shot. Minnetta gives him food at Fabricio's, when the magistrate enters. He has designs upon Minnetta's affections. Her one thought is to avert his suspicion from her father. She cleverly does so, but, becoming more importunate in his love-making, the magistrate is severely rebuked by Fernando, who leaves the house with Minnetta. At this moment the magpie flies down and steals a spoon from the table. Fernando, her father, before he left gave her a silver spoon and fork to convert into money for him, and accordingly

* Was first performed at Milan in the spring of the year 1817.

On the 8th of April, 1834, Giulia Grisi first appeared before an English audience in this opera at Her Majesty's Theatre. She was born in Milan on the 28th of July, 1811, being the daughter of Gaetani Grisi, an officer of Engineers, in the service of the King of Italy, and niece of Grassini, the celebrated singer. The early portion of her life was spent in the Convent of Mantalette at Florence, in which she received her first instruction in music. Three years later she went to Bologna, where she studied singing under Giacomo Giacomelli, and while under his care she made her *début* in the rôle of "Emma," in the opera of "Zelmira." After this she received further lessons in singing from Madame Pasta and Marliani. On the 24th of April, 1836, she married Auguste Gérard de Melcy, a French gentleman; she afterwards became the wife of Mario, the great tenor. On the 24th of July, 1861, Grisi took her farewell benefit at Covent Garden Theatre. She died in Paris, and was buried the 4th of December, 1869, at Pere la Chaise, near that city.

she has sold them to the pedlar, and has promised her father to hide the money in a tree for him. A terrible complication now arises. Lucia, Fabricio's wife, comes in and counts the silver; the spoon is missing, also a fork, which had disappeared before. The magistrate is still in the house, and he proceeds to question Minnetta. She cries. The money she got from the pedlar rolls on the floor. The pedlar is questioned, and the case seems conclusive against Minnetta. Angry at being repulsed by her, the magistrate orders her to prison.

In the second Act Minnetta is in prison. By the favour of Antonio, the gaoler, she manages to see Gianetto, and also to send the money by Pippo, a servant of Fabricio, to the old tree where her father was to find it. The vicious magistrate once more endeavours to induce her to purchase her liberty at the price of her virtue, but she refuses, and is condemned to death for theft. Pippo goes to hide the money, when the magpie again appears, snatches away one of the coins, and flies with it to the steeple. Pippo follows, and discovers the missing spoon and fork hidden there also. Minnetta is being led to execution. It is a race for time. Pippo sets the bells ringing, and restores the spoon and fork to Lucia just in time to save Minnetta. She, to save her father, would not tell the truth about the fork and spoon she had sold to the pedlar, but Fernando has heard of the situation, and hastens to explain all to the judges. Minnetta is pardoned, and most opportunely a pardon for Fernando arrives, in consideration of his past services. Gianetto and Minnetta are united, and thus the opera is brought to a happy conclusion.

GUGLIELMO TELL.*

(WILLIAM TELL.)

WILLIAM TELL is discovered leaning on his bow. The Swiss peasants are rejoicing at a marriage festival, but Tell laments the condition of his country. Arnold, a young Swiss,

* Was first produced at the Opera House, Paris, in the month of August, 1829.

the son of the patriarch Melcthal, is in love with Matilda, the daughter of Rudolpho, Captain of the Guard of the tyrant Gessler, the German Governor, and he discloses to Tell his fatal affection for the daughter of one of their country's enemies. In the midst of the nuptial rejoicings Leuthold appears—a peasant who has killed an agent of Gessler, who was insulting his daughter. There is no escape for him but by crossing the lake in a storm. None of the fishermen dare take him across, but Tell does so. The first Act closes with Gessler's soldiers trying to discover who has assisted Leuthold to escape. They take Melcthal prisoner.

In the next Act Arnold meets Matilda, and their love-scene is interrupted by Tell, who accuses him of being false to his country, and tells him that Gessler has put his father, Melcthal, to death. Arnold is inspired with hate of Gessler for the deed, and vows to avenge his father's death. This Act closes with the gathering of the inhabitants of the various cantons to rescue their country from the Germans by arms. Matilda and Arnold meet again, when Arnold tells her that he must forsake her until his father's death is avenged.

The scene changes to the Square of Altorf. Gessler has erected a pole, on which is his cap. The populace are required to salute it. Tell approaches, and refuses to do so. His son Jemmy is with him. Gessler notices the son, and orders Tell to shoot the apple from his son's head, otherwise his son will be killed. Then follows the scene of the shooting, in which Tell is successful; but Gessler is only the more infuriated, and has him made prisoner. With difficulty Matilda succeeds in interposing for the safety of Jemmy.

In the last Act Arnold is roused by the peasants to lead them to the rescue of Tell, and to vengeance on Gessler. He obeys the summons, and the scene changes to the lake of the four cantons. Here is Tell's wife. Matilda enters with Jemmy, and while the three are talking Tell arrives with Arnold, amid the shouts of victory. Gessler has fallen by Tell's arrow, which he produces, and liberty is insured to Switzerland.

OTHELLO.*

(OTHELLO.)

OTHELLO, a Moor, in the service of Venice, lands at Venice in the first scene, amid the acclamations of the people—he having been victorious and rescued Cyprus from the Turks. Elmiro, a Venetian patrician, to whose daughter, Desdemona, Othello is secretly married, has meanwhile promised her to Roderigo, son of the Doge. Desdemona hopes that the fame of Othello may alter her father's mind from the enmity he bears to him; but Elmiro insists on her marrying Roderigo, and has everything prepared for the wedding. Othello comes to the feast, and the first Act closes with a general quarrel between Othello, Roderigo, and Elmiro—the Moor having disclosed the fact that Desdemona has become his wife.

In the second Act Iago, the traitorous friend of Othello, poisons his mind against Desdemona by showing him a letter of hers, and a lock of her hair. This letter and its enclosure were intended for Othello himself, but Desdemona's father had intercepted it, and, to explain matters to him, his daughter had pretended that she meant it for Roderigo. Othello falls into the snare. He is interrupted by Roderigo. They quarrel, and leave the stage, about to fight. Desdemona tries to arrest them, but swoons. Her father is distracted, as he believes she is not really Othello's wife. Desdemona is overcome with grief at not seeing Othello again, and in the second scene of the last Act confides her sorrows to her friend Emilia, who then leaves her, and Desdemona sleeps.

Othello enters with a dagger, and the tragedy is enacted. He draws the bed-curtains to conceal his crime, when Elmiro and

* Was first performed at the Theatre del Fondo, Naples, in the autumn of 1816.

Giuditta Pasta made her appearance at the King's Theatre, London, 24th of April, 1824, in the character of "Desdemona." Her maiden name was Negri, her family being of Jewish extraction. She was born at Samano, near Milan, 1798. For instructors in music she had Bartolomeo Lotte, chapel-master of the cathedral at Como, and Asiola, professor in the Conservatory at Milan. At an early age she married Signor Pasta, who was also a singer. The latter part of her life she spent at her villa on Lake Como, and died on the 1st of April, 1865.

others enter. Explanations have been given, Othello is pardoned by the council, and Iago has died by the hand of Roderigo, but before doing so has confessed his treachery. Elmiro says he gives Othello his daughter's hand. Othello, drawing the curtains, says, "Yes, I must join her now," and stabs himself, to the great horror of the bystanders, and so the opera ends.

SEMIRAMIDE.*

THE opera opens with a scene in the Temple of Belus, in Babylon. A mysterious ceremony is proceeding, conducted by Oroë, the chief of the Magi connected with the election of a successor to the late King Ninus. Semiramide, his widow, has the right to nominate whom she thinks fit. Assur, a prince of royal blood, hopes to be chosen, as Ninias, son and proper heir of Ninus, is supposed to be dead. The omens being unpropitious, the nomination is put off until the return of Arsaces, a commander in the army, who has been sent by the Queen to consult the oracle. Semiramide has a violent passion for this same Arsaces, but he in no way returns it, his affections being already taken up by Azema, whom Assur is also in love with.

The second Act opens with the Queen nominating the successor to the throne. To the astonishment of all she declares Arsaces to be the man of her choice, and further announces her intention of making him her husband. On this the tomb of

* Was produced at the Theatre la Fenice, Venice, during the Carnival, 1823.

On the 6th of July, 1841, Clara Anastasia Novello made her début in this opera at Padua. Her father was the well-known church music composer, Vincenzo Novello. She was born in Oxford Street, London, on the 10th of June, 1818. She studied music and singing at the Conservatoire, Paris. On the 22nd of October, 1843, Clara Novello became the wife of Count Gigliucci.

Another great singer also made her début at Covent Garden Theatre in the character of "Arsaces" in this opera—Marietta Alboni. This took place on the 6th of April, 1847, the other leading characters being taken by Grisi and Tamburini. In 1849, on the retirement of Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt, Mlle. Alboni became Prima Donna at Her Majesty's Theatre. She married at Paris, July, 1853, the Count de Pepoli.

Ninus opens and his shade coming out calls upon Arsaces to follow him into the grave, there to hear of certain crimes which have been committed, and which he must avenge; and with this the second Act ends.

In the next scene, from a conversation which takes place between Semiramide and Assur, the fact is gathered that they poisoned the late King Ninus; and later on, in a scene in the sanctuary, Arsaces is made acquainted with the same fact, and also that he is the lost Ninias, son of Ninus and Semiramide. Oroë, calls upon him to avenge his father's death with the blood of his mother and Assur. He agrees to take the life of Assur, but feels compunction in slaying his mother. Semiramide, still ignorant of the birth of Arsaces, tries to make love to him, when he hands her a paper written by his father in his dying moments, by which she learns that her crime is exposed, and that her lost son stands before her. She is overwhelmed with shame, but Arsaces forgives her, and departs to avenge his father's death on Assur.

The last scene is the interior of the mausoleum of Ninus at night, into which Arsaces has followed Assur. Stabbing at random in the dark, he unwittingly slays his mother. Assur is then seized by the attendants, to be dealt with as the murderer of his late king; and while being led off he tells Arsaces that he has slain his own mother, who is so horrified that he attempts to take his own life, and is only prevented from doing so by Oroë, in whose arms he faints away.

TANCREDI.*

TANCREDI (*Tancred*), the hero of this opera, is a scion of the royal house of Syracuse, but for political reasons has been banished his country, and his estates given to Orbazzano, a warrior. Argirio, brother of Amenaide, the heroine of the piece, has determined to bestow the hand of his sister upon Orbazzano, although she and Tancred have already plighted their troth to one another.

* Was produced at the Theatre La Fenice, Venice, in the year 1813.

At the opening of the opera the Saracens, led by Solamin, are at the gates of the city of Syracuse. Argirio having arranged that the nuptials of his sister and Orbazzano shall take place the following day, she, in despair, sends, by a trusty messenger, a letter to Tancredi, praying him to come and succour her. The messenger is intercepted by Orbazzano, who, enraged at finding he has a rival, inserts the name of Solamin in place of that of Tancred in the letter, and openly accuses Amenaide of treachery to her country. She is doomed to die unless a knight can be found to take up her cause against her accuser, when Tancred, who has arrived in disguise to assist in the defence of his native city, and who believes her unfaithful to him, yet challenges Orbazzano to mortal combat, and slays him. Still convinced of her faithlessness, he joins the warriors in the defence of Syracuse, and with his own hand kills Solamin, the Saracen general, and learns from his dying lips the innocence of Amenaide. Returning triumphant and victorious to the city, he craves pardon of his ladylove, and proclaims her as his bride.

THOMAS.

CHARLES LOUIS AMBROISE THOMAS, son of a well-known professor of music at Metz, was born in that town on the 5th of August, 1811. He entered the Conservatoire, Paris, in 1828, being then somewhat advanced in his musical education, owing to his father's care. He studied the pianoforte under Zimmerman, harmony and accompaniment under Dourlen, and composition under Lesueur. He gained the following prizes at the Conservatoire:—1829, First Prize as a Pianist; 1830, First Prize for Harmony; and 1832, the Grand Prize of Rome. In the year 1837 he wrote "*La Double Echelle*"; 1838, "*Le Peruquier de la Régence*"—"Le Panier Fleuri"—for the Opera Comique; 1840, "*Carline*"; 1841, "*Le Comte de Carmagnola*"; 1842, "*Le Guerillero*"; 1843, "*Angélique et Médor*"; 1849, "*Le Caïd*"—which was his first great success; 1850, "*Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*"; 1851, "*Raymond*"; 1853, "*La Tonelli*"; 1855, "*La Cour de Celimène*"; 1856, "*Psychè*"; 1857, "*Le Carnaval de Venise*"; 1860, "*Le Roman d'Elvine*"; 1866, "*Mignon*"; 1868, "*Hamlet*" (vide note)—all of which operas were first performed at the Opera, Paris; 1874, "*Gilles et Gilletin*," at the Opera Comique, in April; 1877, "*Françoise de Rimini*," at the Opera. In 1851 M. Thomas was made Member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts; 1869, December, Officer of Instruction Publique; 1871, he succeeded Auber as director of the Conservatoire de Musique; and in 1868 he was made Commander of the Legion of Honour.

HAMLET.*

THE opera is founded on Shakespeare's tragedy, but differs slightly from it in the situations represented. The King has

* Was first performed at the Opera House in the Rue Lepeletier, Paris, on the 9th of March, 1868. The hundredth repetition of it was prevented by the Opera House being burnt down on the 23rd of October, 1873.

just married the wife of his murdered brother. Hamlet is disgusted at his mother's conduct, and is thinking of leaving the Palace, but Laertes, Ophelia's brother, persuades him to stay to take care of her while he is away on a foreign mission.

In the second Act Horatio, Marcellus, and Hamlet meet the ghost of the dead king on the battlements, who reveals to Hamlet the circumstances of the murder.

In the third Act Hamlet pretends to be mad. He pays no attention to Ophelia. He plans the scheme of introducing the actors at the festival with Horatio and Marcellus. The performance is enacted. At the critical moment of the murder in the garden, Hamlet, feigning madness, denounces his uncle, and the Court breaks up in confusion.

The fourth Act opens with Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be, or not to be!" Then follows a scene with Ophelia and the Queen, in which Hamlet tells Ophelia he no longer loves her, and bids her get to a nunnery. She leaves them in sorrow. Hamlet then talks to his mother, and accuses her as in the tragedy. The ghost re-appears at the interview, and the Act closes with Hamlet exhorting his mother to repent.

In the last Act the tragedy of Ophelia's death is enacted. The scene opens with a chorus of peasants; a ballet—"The Feast of Spring"—follows, and then Ophelia enters, bedecked with flowers and bereft of reason. She sings a wandering song to the villagers, approaches the waters' edge, and, under pretence of concealing herself in the reeds, throws herself into the stream, singing the while "Doubt that the stars are fire, &c., But never doubt I love." The curtain falls as the last words of her song are heard in the distance down the stream.

MIGNON.

THE curtain rises upon the courtyard of a German inn. Country folk are drinking, when Lothario, an old man upon his travels, enters, and sings a mournful air. He is in search of his daughter Mignon, who in her childhood was stolen from her home by the gipsies. At the same inn is a company of gipsies, with whom is Mignon, who offer to amuse the guests staying at the inn. Mignon is told to dance, and when she refuses, is rescued from the brutality of the chief of the gipsies by Lothario, who, however, does not yet recognise in her his own lost daughter,

Who Was Mignon?

Mignon is one of the most touching impersonations of a faithful and guileless girl in adversity, which Goethe, the great master of song and romance, has created in the world-famed duet between the blind harpist and his companion. Cast at a tender age on the cruel streets to lead her father on his dismal rounds, Mignon bewails her hard fate and expresses her intense longing for those who love and know her, the harper responding in sympathetic strains.

and by Guglielmo, a young man fresh from the university, who is travelling for pleasure, and arrives opportunely on the scene. Mignon falls in love with Guglielmo, and persuades him to let her accompany him, he having first purchased her liberty from the gipsies. But there is also staying at the inn a company of strolling actors. Filina, their prima donna, seeing Guglielmo determines to fascinate him, and succeeds in doing so, persuading him, moreover, to accompany the troupe to the castle of a Baron in the neighbourhood, where the actors are about to perform. Thither Mignon follows him and, deeply hurt by Guglielmo's apparent affection for Filina, is on the point of throwing herself into the lake, when Lothario, who has also wandered to the castle, rushes from the trees on the bank just in time to save her from drowning herself. In her despair Mignon imprecates the vengeance of Heaven on the occupiers of the castle, and unguardedly expresses a wish that it may be burnt to the ground. Lothario takes the hint in earnest, and sets fire to the building. Mignon is with difficulty rescued from the flames by Guglielmo, Filina having purposely sent Mignon back into the castle to fetch her bouquet. The second Act ends with a tableau of this crisis in the play, the curtain falling upon Guglielmo holding the fainting Mignon in his arms, after her second escape from peril.

The scene changes to Lothario's own castle in Italy, for in reality Lothario is an Italian Count. Guglielmo and Lothario are both there, as is also Mignon, who is just recovering from the fever which the events in Germany brought upon her. Guglielmo has, from her wandering talk during her illness, discovered Mignon's affection for him. Lothario, to the surprise of Guglielmo, discovers himself as the owner of the grand mansion where they now are, and which has been closed for years. He produces a casket containing the relics of his long-lost daughter. The recollection of old days comes back to Mignon. She recognizes her old playthings, and by repeating by heart the prayers of her childhood, proves her identity to her father, Lothario, who is now overwhelmed with joy, and Guglielmo having previously declared the affection he now feels for Mignon, the last Act closes upon every prospect of happiness for Lothario, Mignon, and her accepted lover, Guglielmo.

In the first Act of the opera there is a subcurrent of counter-plot introduced in the shape of an ardent admirer of Filina, Federico, who is exceedingly jealous of Guglielmo, and always upon the point of a violent quarrel with him about the fickle actress, Filina.

VERDI.

GIUSEPPE VERDI was born at Rancola, in the Duchy of Parma, on the 9th of October, 1814. His father was an inn-keeper of that town. He received his first lessons in music from an organist at Milan—where he was living—1833—36. Afterwards he studied under Lavinga, and in the year 1839, November 17th, produced his first musical drama, entitled “Oberto di San Bonifazio,” at La Scala, Milan. In the year 1867 his opera “Don Carlos” was produced at the Royal Italian Opera House, Covent Garden; 1847, “I Masnadieri”—which he had written for Her Majesty’s Theatre, London, was there performed, Jenny Lind taking the part of the heroine; but the opera proved a failure in London, though it has since been very successful in Italy. In 1868 he produced “Giovanno d’Arco,” &c., &c. The following is a list of honours conferred upon this justly popular composer:—Member of the Legion of Honour, and corresponding member of the “Académie des Beaux-Arts,” 10th of December, 1859. In 1861 he was elected a member of the Italian Parliament; 1862, Grand Cross of the Russian Order of St. Stanislaus; 1864, June 15th, Foreign Associate of the “Académie des Beaux-Arts”; 1872, Grand Officer of the Order of the Crown of Italy; and in the same year the Viceroy of Egypt conferred on him the Order of Osmain; 1874, November 22nd, Italian Senator—by decree; 1875, May, Commander of the Legion of Honour; and the same year he was given the Cross of Commander and Star of the Austrian Order of Franz Joseph. In 1878 Verdi produced at La Scala Milan an opera in five Acts, entitled “Montezuma.”

AÏDA.*

THE era of this opera is somewhat early, being during one of the reigns of the innumerable Pharaohs, kings of Egypt. Prior

* Was first performed at La Scala, Milan, in the year 1872.

to the commencement of the opera, Aïda, daughter of Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, has been taken prisoner by the Egyptians, and given to Amneris, daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. She takes a great fancy to her, but, unfortunately, Radames, Captain of the King's Guard—whom Amneris secretly loves—does the same thing, and falls desperately in love with Aïda.

The first scene is a hall in the palace of the King of Egypt at Memphis. Radames and Ramphis, high priest of Isis, are talking over the fact that the Ethiopians, led by their king, are about to invade Egypt, and the priest hints that Radames has been selected as general of the forces of Isis. An interview then follows between Radames, Amneris, and Aïda, in which it is evident to the jealous daughter of the King that her slave and Radames love one another, and she secretly vows to be revenged. The King then declares that Isis has selected his former Captain of Guards as general of the forces, and he is given the standard by Amneris. The Act ends with Radames undergoing a mysterious ceremony in the Temple of Isis before leaving for the seat of war.

The first scene of the next Act is a hall in the apartments of Amneris. The Egyptians are returning victorious, and her slaves are bedecking their mistress for the grand festival which is to take place. On the slaves retiring Aïda enters, and Amneris, by telling her that Radames has been slain, wrings from her the fact that she loves him; then declaring her statement to be false, and that Radames really lives, and is returning to be crowned by her, she vows to have revenge on Aïda for daring to look upon her lover.

The next scene is the entrance-gate of Thebes. The King is on a temporary throne, with his daughter by his side, and a large multitude of people are assembled to welcome back their victorious countrymen. The army then marches in, led by Radames, who, after being crowned with laurels by Amneris, is told to ask a boon by the King. He begs that the Ethiopian prisoners be set at liberty, and among them Amonasro, Aïda's father. His request is granted, excepting Amonasro, who is detained as security for the good behaviour of his subjects. The King then presents Radames with the hand of his daughter Amneris, and with this ends the second Act.

The third Act opens with a scene on the banks of the Nile. On the summit of a rock is the temple of Isis, from which proceeds the sounds of a chorus of priests and priestesses singing

to the honour of the goddess Ramphis, and Amneris, accompanied by her women, enters the temple. Aïda then appears thickly veiled, having an appointment with Radames. Suddenly her father, Amonasro, enters, and begs her to get her lover to say which road the Egyptian troops have guarded, as the Ethiopians are about to make another attack on Thebes: she at first treats his proposal with scorn, but at length gives way; and on Radames entering, Amonasro hides. Aïda prays her lover to fly with her to her native land, pointing out to him that if he remains in Thebes he must marry Amneris, and lose her for ever. On his consenting to do so she asks him which road they can escape by without meeting the Egyptian forces: he tells her the gorges of Napata, and so lets out the secret to Amonasro, who, rushing from his hiding-place, declares that there he will plant his forces. They are all three about to leave when Amneris and Ramphis, with priests and guards, coming out of the temple, accuse them of treachery. Amonasro attempts to stab Amneris, but is prevented by Radames, who, giving himself up as prisoner, tells Aïda and her father to escape.

The opening scene of the last Act is a hall lying between the Hall of Justice and the prison in which Radames is confined. Amneris is discovered in despair at the fate of her lover. She calls on the guard to bring him before her, and on his entrance she prays him to clear himself before his judges, and so live to share her love. He refuses; declaring that now Aïda is dead he has nothing to live for. Amneris tells him that Aïda is not dead, for although the Ethiopians were again overcome, and the King Amonasro slain, yet Aïda escaped no one knows whither; but he still declares he will not live to marry her, and so is led back to prison. Amneris falls back in her chair overcome with grief. The priests are then seen to cross over to the Hall of Justice, and Radames follows, surrounded by a guard. Ramphis the high priest accuses him of being a traitor to his country, and on his answering nothing, he passes sentence upon him, to be buried alive in a vault in the temple of Vulcan. On this Amneris rushes wildly in, calling down the vengeance of Heaven on them if they do not alter the sentence, but the priests are obdurate.

The last scene is the temple of Vulcan, so constructed that both the temple and the vault are shown. Radames is discovered in the latter, and a crowd of priests, &c., in the temple.

Suddenly Aïda appears in the vault. She tells her lover that, guessing what his fate would be, she has, unseen, come to share his fate. Amneris is seen to enter the temple, and, throwing herself on the stone over the vault, prays the gods to receive the soul of her lover.

ERNANI.*

ERNANI is in reality son and heir of the Duke of Legorbia and Cardona, proscribed and pursued by Don Carlos Quinto, King of Castile, but has assumed the name of Ernani and the leadership of a body of brigands in Sierras.

The scene opens in the mountains of Arragon, where his followers are drinking and enjoying themselves. In the distance is the Castle of Don Ruy Gomez de Silva, with whose niece, Elvira, Ernani is in love. Ernani and his companions vow to rescue Elvira from her uncle, who is an old man, and is on the point of insisting upon marrying his niece.

The scene changes to Elvira's room in the Castle. It is the night before her wedding. But the King, Don Carlos, is also enamoured of Elvira. This very night he seeks an interview with her, and is about to take her away, when Ernani appears on the scene. They quarrel, but are interrupted by Don Silva and his servants. The King is recognized, and has then to appease Don Silva by pretending he had come in disguise to his castle to confer with him respecting his approaching election to the Empire. Ernani is permitted to go. Silva is within an hour of being married to Elvira, when Ernani gains admission to his castle as a pilgrim, and is promised hospitality. He is flying from the King's soldiers, and Silva offers to preserve him.

* Was produced at Venice in the month of March, 1844.

Pauline Lucca, the well-known singer, made her début in the opera at Olmütz, in September, 1859. Her real surname was Lucas. She was born at Vienna in 1840, and was educated by one Mr. Erl. On the 18th of July, 1863, Pauline Lucca first appeared at Covent Garden Theatre in the opera "*Vasco di Gama*." She married in 1866 the Baron von Rohden.

Ernani tells him who he is. Silva goes to fortify the ramparts, and returns to the room just in time to witness an affectionate scene between Elvira and Ernani. The King is at the gate, and to keep Ernani for his own revenge, Silva conceals him in a secret passage. The King enters, and demands Ernani. Silva refuses to give him up. The King threatens his life, but Elvira entering, he offers to take her instead of her uncle, and does so. Silva then takes two swords and would fight with Ernani, who, however, shows him that the King is his rival for Elvira, and they both vow vengeance first on the King, after that Ernani swears most solemnly to give up his life to Silva when he demands it.

The third Act takes place in the vaults of Aix La Chapelle, near Charlemagne's tomb. Here the conspirators against the election of Don Carlos to the Empire are assembled. The lot falls to Ernani to assassinate the King; but the King has heard of the place of meeting, and discloses himself just as he is elected Emperor Charles V. A procession of electors and courtiers comes to the vault to congratulate him. The conspirators are doomed, and Ernani having disclosed the fact that he is in reality John of Arragon, Elvira intercedes with the Emperor, who pardons them, and gives Elvira to Ernani. They are married, but on the very evening of the wedding Silva appears, blows the horn which Ernani had given him as a pledge of his oath, and demands Ernani's life. In this awful crisis Ernani remains true to his word, and stabs himself. Elvira falls fainting on his body, while Silva exults in his revenge.

I LOMBARDI.*

THE Epoch of this opera is that of the first crusade against the Saracens. Pagano and Arvino, sons of Folco the Lombard,

* Was produced at Milan in February, 1843.

Prince of Rhodes, both fall in love with Viclinda; she preferring Arvino of the two, marries him; Pagano, filled with jealousy, tries to take his brother's life and failing, flies his country, and becomes a brigand.

The opera opens in the Square in front of the Cathedral Church of St. Ambrose. Pagano has returned, repentant and forgiven, but on again seeing his brother and former love, the old feeling of revenge returns. With the assistance of Pirro, armour-bearer to Arvino, he again makes an attempt upon his brother's life, and by mistake, stabs his father, Folco. In despair at his crime he flies to the deserts of Palestine and, becoming a hermit, leads a repentant and holy life.

The scenes of the second Act are laid in and about Antioch. Giselda, daughter of Arvino, has been taken prisoner by the Saracens, and during her captivity falls in love with Oronte, a Saracen prince, in whose harem she is a prisoner, and whose mother Sophia befriends her. Arvino, meanwhile, at the call of Peter the hermit—who is, unknown to him, his brother Pagano—has crossed the water with knights and warriors to the first crusade; he seeks the hermit to inquire about his daughter, who promises that he shall soon meet her. Pirro having, like himself, repented of his crime, has promised to open the gates of Antioch to the christian soldiers.

The next scene is in the harem of Oronte in Antioch, where Giselda is prisoner. On the entrance of her father and Peter the hermit, she, believing them to have slain her lover, gives them but a cold welcome, which greatly incenses her father. Oronte, meanwhile, having escaped, dressed as a Lombard, persuades Giselda to fly with him; but, being pursued he is mortally wounded, and dies in the hermitage of Peter, having first become a convert to christianity.

The last Act opens with Giselda having a vision of her lover in heaven. Pagano, or Peter the hermit, leads the crusaders to the siege of Jerusalem, and, in protecting his brother, is mortally wounded; he then reveals his identity, and dies embracing Arvino. With this the opera ends.

UN BALLO IN MASCHERA.*

(THE MASKED BALL.)

THE scene of this opera is laid in Boston in America. Richard, Earl of Warwick, Governor of Boston, becomes enamoured of Amelia, wife of his secretary, Renato, a creole, and she, though deploring it, has more than a tender feeling for him.

In the first Act Thomas and Samuel, two conspirators, are discovered plotting to take the life of the Governor, of which he is warned by his faithful secretary, Renato. An application is made to Richard to banish one Ulrica, a fortune-teller, but he determines first to pay her a visit incognito with his attendants; for this purpose he disguises himself as a fisherman. While there Amelia comes seeking an interview with the sybil. The hut is cleared, but Richard hides himself, and overhears his ladylove ask Ulrica for a charm against her unlawful passion for himself. She is told to pluck, at the hour of midnight, a certain herb that grows at the place of execution. On her leaving, the attendants of the Earl are admitted, and he, stealing from his hiding-place, joins them unnoticed. Demanding of Ulrica his fortune, she tells him his best friend will shortly take his life; and further states that he who first shakes him by the hand will be the man. Richard offers his hand to all in the hut; none will take it. At this moment Renato enters, who at once grasps it, and in doing so, recognises his master, much to Ulrica's astonishment.

The next scene is the place of execution, outside the walls of Boston, at midnight. Amelia, heavily veiled, has come to pluck the herb, when Richard suddenly appears, and presses his suit. Hearing footsteps approaching she again drops her veil. It is Renato, her husband, who begs the Governor to fly, as

* Was written for Naples in the year 1858, but was not allowed to be performed. It was produced the following year at the Theatre Apollo, Rome.

Sofia Scalchi-Lolli—otherwise known as Madame Scalchi—made her debut as "Ulrica" in this opera, at Mantua, in the year 1867. She was born at Turin, 29th of November, 1851; made her first appearance in England at Covent Garden Theatre as "Azucena" in "*Il Trovatore*" in the year 1869. She married, in 1875, Signor Luigi Alberto Lolli, of Ferrara.

the conspirators are on his track; he only consents to do so on Renato promising to lead the veiled lady to the city without asking who she is. Hardly has Richard left before the conspirators enter, headed by Thomas and Samuel, and demand Amelia to unveil. Renato is about to protect her at the point of his sword, when she rushes in between the combatants, and in doing so her veil falls off, disclosing to the secretary his wife. Renato, justly incensed, joins the plot against the Governor's life, and the lot falls upon him to do the deed. Meanwhile, Richard, repenting of his underhand attempts against the honour of his faithful servant's wife, determines to get rid of the temptation by giving Renato a good appointment in Arragon, and sending him there with his wife.

The last scene is the masked ball. Amelia is warning Richard of the attempt that will be made upon his life, when Renato steps between them and stabs him to the heart. The Earl then declares Amelia to be innocent, hands Renato the order for his departure with his wife, and, forgiving all, dies.

MACBETH.*

The first scene of the opera is the heath scene with the witches. They hail Macbeth Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, and King of Scotland. A messenger enters to announce to Macbeth that the King has made him Thane of Cawdor.

In the second scene Lady Macbeth in the castle reads her husband's letter, telling her he is Thane of Cawdor. She divulges her scheme for making her husband King. The King is coming to the castle, and she bids her husband screw his courage to the sticking point. The King arrives, Macbeth recites the famous passage, "Is this a dagger," &c., and goes out to return to his wife with bloody hands, announcing that he has murdered the King. His wife goes to besmear the sleeping grooms with blood, and the first Act closes with the general discovery that the King has been murdered.

The second Act opens with Macbeth's resolution to get rid of Banquo. Banquo and his son are next seen in the park,

* Produced at Florence in March, 1847.

where two parties of assassins are waiting for them. As they leave the stage Banquo is heard crying "Treachery!" Then follows the banquet-scene. Banquo's ghost appears, and Macbeth apostrophizes him. With this scene the second Act closes.

The third Act opens with the cauldron scene. Macbeth enters, and the apparitions come before him, as in Shakespeare's play. Macbeth swoons, but is restored by the aerial spirits. He vows vengeance against Macduff, and so ends the third Act.

The last Act opens with a chorus of Scottish exiles in England mourning the fate of their country. The scene changes to Scotland. Macduff has lost his wife and children; he calls Malcolm and the chorus to arms. Then follows the sleep-walking scene in Dunsinane Castle, when Lady Macbeth unburdens her conscience. Macbeth enters, and is informed by the chorus that his wife is dead. Then follow his warriors, telling him that Birnam Wood is advancing upon him. The English soldiers appear, bearing boughs of trees in front of them. A battle ensues. Macduff and Macbeth meet: they fight, and Macbeth falls, and dies. Malcolm is proclaimed King, and with this the opera ends.

NINO.

(NINUS.)

THE opera begins with a scene at Babylon. It is the interior of the Temple of Isis. The priests and people of Babylon are bewailing the approach of the King of Assyria with his army. Fenena, however, the daughter of the King of Assyria, is a prisoner in Babylon, and it is hoped to secure peace by her means. She is given into the charge of Idaspe, or Hydaspes, a Babylonian Prince, who, however, is in love with her, and is prepared to assist her to escape. Just as he is doing so the Assyrians, headed by Abigail, a sort of Amazon, enter and seize the Temple. Ninus, the King, follows, but the priest Orotaspe steps forward with a sword and threatens to kill Fenena before her father's eyes if he profanes the Temple any longer. He is about to strike her when Hydaspes averts the blow, and Fenena rushes into her father's arms. Ninus then gives orders for the extermination of the Babylonians, and the first Act closes.

The second Act is laid at Nineveh. Abigail in the palace has designs against Ninus' kingdom. She has hitherto been considered by the Assyrians to be the King's daughter, but the truth is, she is the child of a slave. The King has given the care of his kingdom to Fenena in his absence, and Abigail is proportionately jealous; she is, moreover, in love with Hydaspes, and this adds fuel to the fire of her vengeance. Fenena has adopted the religion of Isis, and released the Babylonian captives. The High Priest of Belas and the Magi conspire to put Abigail on the throne. They spread a rumour that the King is dead. He, however, suddenly appears, and in impious language requires them all to worship him as their god. Fenena refuses to do this, and while the King, her father, is menacing her a thunder-bolt falls, striking the King, and removing his crown from his head. Abigail seizes the crown, and so ends the second Act.

Abigail is on the throne. Ninus is not dead, but half mad. He struggles up to the throne, where Abigail induces him in a rash moment to seal the death-warrant of the Babylonian captives. But Fenena's name is amongst those proscribed. He is about to recall his warrant, and is furious with Abigail, charging her with being only a slave; but Abigail produces the scroll which is the evidence of her low birth, and tears it in pieces, calls the guard, and threatens the King with imprisonment. The Babylonians are then discovered in chains, weeping over their fate, but Orotasphe prophesies destruction to Nineveh, and with his imprecation the scene closes.

Ninus is then discovered in his palace. He sees from the window his daughter Fenena being taken to slaughter. His reason returns, and he worships the omnipotent diety, Isis; then, appealing to the warriors about him, he proclaims his intention to save his child and recover his throne. Fenena is about to be sacrificed. The priests are ready to offer her up a victim to the dog Belus, when Ninus rushes in to the rescue, announces the self-destruction of Abigail by poison, and finally proclaims the worship of Isis. The idol of Belus falls broken of itself, and the opera closes with the release of the Babylonians, and a chorus of praise to Isis.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the plot of this opera has no real historic foundation. It was probably Verdi's original intention to write an opera on the history of Nabucodonosor, some of the incidents of whose life are here attributed to Ninus.

RIGOLETTO.*

RIGOLETTO, the hero of this opera, is jester to and general pamparer of the licentious tastes of his master, the Duke of Mantua; his body like his mind is loathsome, being crooked and hump-backed. Through his connivance the domestic peace of two noblemen of the court has been broken in upon, *i.e.*, the Count Cesprane and the Count Monterone. The former determines to have his revenge on the servant, Rigoletto, while the latter openly accuses the master, the Duke, of seducing his daughter, and, being led off to prison, calls down the vengeance of heaven on both. Rigoletto is terribly impressed with this curse, and retires to seek comfort from the only pure thing connected with him, and that is his daughter Gilda. This maiden he keeps closely confined, only allowing her to go out once a week to church, and of whose existence, as his daughter, no one has any idea. The Duke, ever on the look out for a pretty face, has nevertheless marked her at her devotions, and, in the garb of a student, he manages to declare to her his pretended love. Meanwhile, Count Ceprano has found out that Rigoletto pays visits to the house where his daughter is confined, and, it being next door to his own, determines upon a plot to outdo the humpbacked jester. He gets a band of his followers to pretend that they are about to abduct his wife, the Countess Ceprano, and by that means secure the assistance of Rigoletto, who, blindfolded, holds the ladder while they really seize upon his daughter and hand her over to the tender mercies of the Duke. They having secured their prize and gone, Rigoletto takes off the bandage, only to find that he has assisted in the dishonour of his own child. Mad with rage and shame he swoons, and with this ends Act I.

Rigoletto then hires an assassin called Sparafucile to kill the Duke, and his sister Magdalena allures the Duke into a secluded public house to assist her brother in his work of blood; but, being charmed with his manners she determines if possible to effect his escape. Meantime, Rigoletto, having ordered Gilda to put on male attire preparatory to her departure for Verona, leads her to the house in which the Duke is making himself very pleasant to Magdalena, in order to show her how faithless her

* First performed at Vienna in March, 1851.

lover is; for, in spite of the dishonour he has brought upon her, she cannot help loving him. While outside she hears Sparafucile and his sister talking, the latter pleading for the Duke's life, and the former declaring that he must either kill him or a substitute. Gilda, with a devotion worthy of a better cause, determines to sacrifice her life, and entering the house is stabbed to the heart by Sparafucile, and her body is put in a sack to be handed over to Rigoletto as the dead Duke. Rigoletto returns to inquire how matters have gone, and, on paying the arranged sum of money, the sack is given to him. He is exulting over the death of his master, and the seducer of his daughter, when he hears the Duke's voice from behind. His suspicions are aroused, and, opening the sack, he discovers, to his horror, his dying daughter. In despair he falls at her side, and on this scene the curtain drops.

LA TRAVIATA.*

(THE LOST ONE.)

THE scene of this opera is laid in and about Paris at the commencement of the 18th century.

* Was produced at Venice in March, 1853.

On the 24th of May, 1856, Marietta Piccolomini made her début in this opera at Her Majesty's Theatre, London. She was born at Sienna in 1834 of a most illustrious race of warriors, statesmen, and churchmen. Among her collateral ancestors were Pope Pius II., and her uncle, a cardinal. Her relatives were much averse to her going on to the stage, but, being a person of determination, she won the day, and made her début at Rome in the month of November, 1852. She received her musical education from Romani. In the year 1860 she married the Marquis Gaetani.

Not a less remarkable singer also made her début as "Violetta" in this opera at the Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, on the 27th of October, 1860, and again at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, in 1867, in the person of Christine Nilsson, or the "Swedish nightingale," as she has been termed. She was born at Wederslof, near Wexio, in Sweden, on the 3rd of August, 1843. As a child she was accustomed to attend fairs, singing and accompanying herself on the violin. On one of these festive occasions at Ljungby, near Kalmar, in the year 1857, Mr. F. G. Tonérhjelm, a gentleman of good means, was so struck with little

Alfred Germont, son of Signor George Germont, becomes deeply enamoured of Violetta Valery, a lady of light character, and she, though at first laughing at the idea, at length returns his love, and, leaving her dissolute life and companions, retires into the country with him. Signor Germont, anxious for his son's welfare, there finds her, and, in the absence of her lover, so works upon her feelings that she promises to break with him. She does this by accepting an invitation to a ball giving by one of her old companions, Flora Bervois, and goes there under the protection of Baron Douphol. Alfred Germont hearing of this meets them there, and a most heartrending scene takes place, when he before all declares her faithless, and in his frenzy behaves in a most ungallant manner.

Violetta, heartbroken, disgraced, and dying, is discovered in the last scene in her bedroom. Signor Germont having told his son that Violetta only left him at his own urgent request, they are both so struck with remorse that they come, the one to accept her as his daughter, and the other to claim her as his bride; but they are too late, and only get there in time to be forgiven by the dying and injured woman, and to make the last moments of the poor creature happy by their presence.

IL TROVATORE.*

(THE TROUBADOUR.)

THE scene opens in a passage in the Palace of Aliaferia, where the Count de Luna has apartments. Here one of his servants tells a piece of the family history to his comrades. How the Count de Luna had two sons, the younger one of whom was "spoken over" by a gipsy when a child. The woman was burnt, but the child disappeared, and was supposed to have been stolen and killed by the gipsy's daughter.

Christine's voice that he adopted her and placed her at school in Halmstadt on the Kuttgat. She was afterwards moved to Stockholm, where she studied under Franz Berwald, and thence to Paris, where she received instruction from Masset and Wurtel. Christine Nilsson married at Westminster Abbey, on the 27th of August, 1872, M. Auguste Rouzoud, the son of an eminent French merchant.

* Was produced at Rome in January, 1853.

The next scene discovers Leonora in the Palace gardens. She is one of the Queen's attendants. She tells her friend who is with her how she loves the Troubadour Manrico—whom she first met at the tournament, when as an unknown warrior he won the day. They go into the Palace, while the Count de Luna enters the garden. He sees a light in Leonora's window. He is desperately in love with her, and is about to rush up to her room, when he hears the lute of the Troubadour in the garden, and conceals himself. Leonora comes out to meet her lover, and at first mistakes the Count for him. Manrico approaches, and then Leonora, to the great rage of the Count, declares Manrico to be the man she loves. The rivals quarrel and retire to fight a duel, and so ends the first Act.

The second Act discloses a ruined house in Brittany, the home of the gipsies. Azucena, the daughter of the witch burnt by the Count de Luna, is there, and so is Manrico, who is her reputed son, but in reality the son of the Count de Luna, and brother of the present Count. Day is breaking, and Azucena recounts to the gipsies round the fire how, when her mother was burned, she threw her own son, by mistake for Manrico, into the fire that was consuming her mother. She reproaches Manrico for having spared De Luna's life when it was in his power in the duel. A messenger enters with a letter for Manrico. He is chosen by the Prince to defend Castellor, and is told further that Leonora, thinking him dead, is going to enter a convent that night. He leaves the gipsy camp.

In the next scene the Count de Luna, thinking his rival is dead (for Manrico has been severely wounded in battle lately by De Luna's followers), approaches the convent to seize Leonora on her way to the altar. A chorus of nuns is heard within the walls, and Leonora comes with her lady friends to take the veil. As she is bidding them farewell the Count seizes her, but Manrico appears like a ghost. Manrico's followers appear, and take the Count prisoner. Leonora goes with Manrico.

In the third Act the Count de Luna is storming Castellor. Azucena, who has followed Manrico, is brought prisoner into his camp. He finds out she is Manrico's reputed mother, and daughter of the gipsy who burned (as he thinks) his young brother, and he orders her to be burnt. Manrico is in the citadel, and is on the point of entering the chapel to marry Leonora, when the news is brought him of Azucenas position. He rushes to her rescue.

In the last Act Leonora approaches the prison window of Manrico, who is confined in the Palace of Aliaferia with the gipsy Azucena. The Count has ordered his execution for the next day, and that Azucena should be burnt. Leonora meets the Count and intercedes for Manrico, and even goes the length of promising to become the Count's wife if he will spare Manrico. He consents; but Leonora takes the poison from a ring she wears, determined never to become the Count's wife. She goes to Manrico's prison. She tells him the price she is paying for his liberty in accepting De Luna, and implores him to be gone. He curses her for her want of fidelity to him, not knowing that she is only waiting for the poison to take effect. She falls to the ground, and then tells him all. The Count enters to witness her death, and delivers Manrico to his soldiers for execution. He turns to Azucena, and points to the execution of her son from the window, when, to his horror, he hears from her that he has killed his own brother. Azucena falls dead, having avenged her mother, and the Count is left alone, "doomed to live."

WAGNER.

RICHARD WAGNER was born at Leipsic 22nd May, 1813. He was educated at Dresden, and in the University of his native town. At an early age he was made Musical Director of the Theatre Royal, Dresden, where his operas "Rienzi,"—"Der Fliegende Holländer," or "Il vascallo fantasma,"—"Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin" were first performed. In the year 1848, being involved in Political troubles, he took refuge in Zurich. In 1865 he directed the Philharmonic Society Concerts in London. On the 22nd of May, 1872, Wagner laid the foundation stone of a Theatre at Baireuth, in which, in the year 1876, was performed his four operas which were written on incidents occurring in the old Niebelunglied.

See also, Wagner's Operas "page 106.

LOHENGRIN.

THE scene opens on the banks of the Scheldt, near Antwerp. Henry I., King of Germany, has come to Antwerp to levy forces against the Hungarians, but finds discord and disorder rife in Antwerp, and calls upon Frederick of Telramund to explain the cause of it. Frederick relates how he is the guardian of the late Duke of Brabant's two children, Godfrey and Elsa, but that Godfrey has been murdered by his sister Elsa, leaving him (Frederick) heir to the dukedom. The King calls upon Elsa to prove her innocence. A trial by combat is to take place. On the one side is Frederick, to prove his accusation. No one appears as Elsa's champion. She dreamily sings of a glittering knight who will come to help her, and at last, after several summons by trumpet, a boat drawn by a swan glides down the river. In the boat stands Lohengrin, Knight of the Holy Grail, who steps ashore and undertakes to fight for Elsa if she will consent to be his wife; but he adds the condition that she is never to ask who he is in rank or by name. She consents to his terms. The combat takes place, and Frederick is defeated, though Lohengrin spares his life.

The second Act opens with a scene between Frederick and his wife, Ortrud, daughter of the Prince of Friesland. Frederick reproaches her with having caused his disgrace by telling him falsely to accuse Elsa. Ortrud informs him that Lohengrin will lose his power if Elsa can be induced to get him to disclose his name. They determine upon doing this. It is night, and they are on the steps of the Minster. Elsa appears in the balcony of the palace opposite to them, sees Ortrud, and, pitying her loneliness and exclusion from the palace festivities, invites her into the *Kemenate*, or abode of the women. The day breaks. The nobles of Brabant assemble on the Minster steps and greet each other. Herald's proclaim Frederick as outlawed, the stranger knight, Lohengrin, as the guardian of Brabant. Elsa approaches the Minster in bridal procession. Ortrud is with her. Suddenly Ortrud bars her way to the church, taunts her with not knowing her husband's name, and insists upon having precedence in the procession. The King and Lohengrin, however, arrive, and lead Elsa in, but not before Frederick has stepped from behind a buttress, and, in a whispered conversation, has told her that he can help her to ensure for herself everlasting faithfulness in her husband, and a knowledge of all his secrets. The curtain falls as she enters the cathedral.

In the third Act Lohengrin and Elsa are conducted to the bridal-chamber, where the King and nobles leave them. She breaks her vow. She asks him who he is. Frederick and four Brabant nobles burst into the room with drawn swords. Lohengrin seizes his, and strikes Frederick lifeless. The nobles kneel to him and then remove Frederick's dead body.

In the last Scene the King and nobles are assembled on the banks of the stream. Lohengrin has promised to reveal his name and condition to Elsa, and she comes to hear it. He tells them all how he is Lohengrin, son of the great Percival, who guards the cup of the Holy Grail on Mount Salvat, and how he was sent to Antwerp as Knight of the Holy Grail to fight Elsa's battle. The swan appears again on the stream. Lohengrin tells them the Grail has sent for him. He gives Elsa his sword, a ring, and his horn for her brother, who he prophesies will return alive to her. Ortrud steps forward exultingly, tells Elsa how the swan is her brother Godfrey—whom she herself by magic thus transformed—and taunts her with the fact that her own brother is taking Lohengrin from her. Lohengrin

prays: the dove of the Holy Grail descends. Lohengrin removes the gold chain from the swan's neck, and restores Godfrey to his sister. He himself steps into the boat and is carried away, while Godfrey is proclaimed Duke of Brabant, and Elsa is overcome with grief at Lohengrin's departure.

In the opera *Lohengrin*, Knight of the Holy Grail, is introduced as a symbol of christianity, defeating Frieslandish heathenism in the wiles and machinations of the sorceress Ortrud.

TANNHÄUSER.

TANNHÄUSER is a German knight-minstrel of noble birth, the friend and guest of Hermann Landgrave of Thuringia, who lives at his castle in the valley of Wartburg.

The scene opens in the Hürselburg—the enchanted abode of Venus—whither Tannhäuser has been lured by the Goddess of Love. He is growing tired of the enchanting pleasures to be met with there. He sings to her, and implores her to release him, and let him return to earth. She endeavours to induce him to stay, but he is inexorable. She foretells disaster for him, but he tells her he will then appeal to Heaven. Thunder is heard, the goddess disappears, and the scene rapidly changes to the Wartburg valley. Tannhäuser hears the chorus sung by a band of pilgrims passing down the valley, and is moved to invoke the forgiveness of Heaven for his sins. His friend the Landgrave approaches, and with difficulty persuades him to stay amongst them. He is reminded of his love for Elizabeth, the niece of the Landgrave, and this recollection induces him to stay.

In the second Act there is a tournament of bards in the Hall of Apollo, at the Castle of Wartburg. Each in turn sings his lay before the Landgrave and his court. Then Tannhäuser rises, and, carried away by the excitement, sings of the Hürselburg as the only place where love can be learnt. All are horror-struck at his impiety, and would kill him, but Elizabeth intercedes and saves his life, on the condition that he joins the pilgrimage to Rome, there to seek absolution for his sins.

In the third Act Elizabeth is watching the return of the pilgrims. They come, but Tannhäuser is not amongst them. In

deep grief she ascends the hill to the Wartburg. Night sets in, and Tannhäuser appears, travel-stained. He tells Wolfran, one of the court of the Landgrave, how the Pope refused him absolution, and how he intends to return to the Goddess of Love again. Venus appears in a mist and claims him, but Wolfran points to the bier on which Elizabeth is being carried to her grave, descending the hill, and tells him an angel has fled to heaven to pray for him. Venus disappears, exclaiming that he is saved. The day dawns, the funeral chant of Elizabeth approaches nearer, and Tannhäuser, invoking Elizabeth's blessing from heaven, sinks to the ground and dies.

The opera ends with a procession of pilgrims bearing Tannhäuser's staff, which has budded miraculously—the Pope in anathematizing him having told him that his pilgrims' staff would bud before he was forgiven.

DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER.

(THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.)

THE opening scene represents a gulf surrounded by rocks. A Norwegian ship lies at anchor—there is a storm raging. Dalando, captain of the vessel, descends from the rocks and describes how, having been driven before the storm, he has been forced to seek shelter in this bay, his own home being but a few miles up the coast. Having given orders to keep a sharp look out, he goes below, leaving the helmsman on deck, who, singing a song about his love on shore, gradually falls asleep. The storm increases, and suddenly in the far distance the phantom ship appears bearing down rapidly for the bay. It runs in alongside the Norwegian vessel and casts anchor. The crew of the phantom ship then silently furl sail, and "the Flying Dutchman," captain of the vessel, attired in black, steps on shore. He tells his tale of woe; how he is doomed to traverse the seas for seven years at a time, when he may land and try to break the curse, but failing, he has again to start for a like period. How in storm and battle he has sought and prayed for death, but to no purpose. Dalando comes on deck, and, seeing the strange vessel alongside, after waking the helmsman,

calls on the Dutchman to declare himself; he tells him his nation and craves him to give him lodging in his house, offering in return great treasures. At a sign two of the Dutch sailors convey a chest on shore full of pearls and precious stones, which so delight the avaricious Dalando that he further promises, on the Dutchman asking him, to give him his daughter Senta's hand in marriage. While they are talking the storm abates, and the first Act ends with both vessels preparing to put to sea to make for the port where Dalando lives.

The scene of the next Act is a room in Dalando's house. Dame Mary and maidens are discovered spinning and singing. Senta, Dalando's daughter is sitting apart gazing at a portrait of the Flying Dutchman which hangs on the wall. Her companions laugh at her for being so much engrossed with the portrait. She declares that could she but meet him she would break the curse under which he exists, and then sings the ballad of the "Flying Dutchman," telling how, when nearing a cape in a storm, he called upon the foul fiend himself to stop him from rounding the point, and that for this blasphemy he is compelled to roam the seas until he find some maiden who will consent to marry him. How every seven years he is permitted to land to try and find the woman who will thus devote herself to him, and she finishes by wildly declaring that she shall do so. At this moment Erik, her lover, enters, who, having overheard her declaration, prays her not to forsake him. He then tells her that he is fearful, having had a strange and vivid dream, and describes how he saw Dalando meet with the Flying Dutchman on the coast during a storm, and that bringing him home, she, Senta, rushed out to greet them, and fell on her knees at the feet of the accursed one; how he raised her up, and pressed her to his heart; that she left with him, and both disappeared flying o'er the main. On his finishing she again wildly declares she will save him, and Erik, shocked rushes from her presence. Hardly has he gone when Dalando and the Dutchman enter. Her father tells her to give the stranger a kind reception as he is her affianced husband and leaves them: she, comparing him with the portrait, sees her lover's dream fulfilled, and on the Dutchman asking her to wed him consents.

The last Act opens with the bay outside Dalando's house, by night; his vessel and the phantom ship are at anchor. The Norwegian vessel is lighted up, and the crew are making merry, while the Dutchman is as dark and silent as night itself. Girls

enter bearing baskets of provisions, and they and the Norwegian sailors call on the Dutch crew to wake up and join them in their carousals. Suddenly a slight movement is noticeable on board the phantom vessel, and a melancholy light is hoisted to the mast head; and while the Dutch crew break into a wild and mysterious chorus, calling on their captain to return, the sea around the vessel rolls and tosses, and the wind is heard whistling through the rigging, while the rest of the bay is calm. The Norwegians try to sing the Dutchmen down, but, getting frightened, at length run away. The Dutch crew then cease, and all is silent again. The door of Dalando's house open, and Senta rushes out, followed by Erik, begging her to remember her old vows to him, describing how she promised to be his bride. The Flying Dutchman, who, unseen, has overheard them, steps forward, and, proclaiming her a traitress, bids her farewell. She prays him to stop, declaring she knows who he is. He tells her she cannot; and then, proclaiming himself to be "*L'Olandese Volante*," (The Flying Dutchman), steps on board and sails from shore. Senta, breaking away from her companions and Erik, who are trying to retain her, rushes up one of the rocks and declaring herself to be faithful to him with her last breath, throws herself into the sea. The phantom ship out at sea is seen suddenly to founder and go down, and the Dutchman and Senta are then descried rising from the waves clasped in one another's arms.

RIENZI.

THIS opera is based upon the story of Rienzi, the last of the Tribunes, but the events as here described are not historically accurate. In the first Act Orsini, a Roman noble, attempts to carry off Irene, Rienzi's sister, from their home in a street of Rome. The rival faction to Orsini, composed of the followers of Colonna, another noble, interfere; Adrian Colonna rescues Irene. A street fight between the rival parties ensues, in the midst of which Rienzi appears, upbraids the nobles, and stops the fight by his influence over the people. The followers of the respective factions disperse, intending to fight the quarrel out the next day outside the gates of the city. Rienzi, Irene, and Adrian Colonna are left alone. Rienzi, in spite of the murder of his young brother by a Colonna, forgives Adriano, on his

promising to be a Roman, and entrusts his sister Irene to his care. Then follows a scene between Adriano and Irene, at the close of which Rienzi reappears at the head of the people of Rome, who proclaim him their saviour, and shout for freedom.

In the second Act Rienzi is Tribune of the people. He has sent out messengers of peace to proclaim liberty and freedom, and is installed in the Capitol. The nobles nominally submit, but conspire to kill Rienzi. In the midst of a festal procession to which all have been invited, Orsini stabs Rienzi, who however, is saved by the shirt of mail he wears under his clothes. The nobles confess their guilt and they are condemned. At the prayer of Adriano and Irene, Rienzi intercedes with the people to spare the lives of the condemned nobles, and with difficulty procures their pardon from the infuriated populace. The nobles have fled and, false to their oaths, are assembled outside the city with their followers. The people reproach Rienzi for his clemency demanding to be led to battle. Rienzi in spite of Adriano's entreaties, gives the signal to march, which the people do to the strains of a fine Battle hymn.

In the last Act is enacted the fall of the great Tribune. The people are discontented, the foreign ambassadors have withdrawn from the city. Adriano, his father having been killed, is for joining the conspiracy against Rienzi, who appears on the scene with his sister Irene. There is a procession of priests and monks, whom Rienzi endeavours to follow into the church of St. John Lateran, but to his amazement Raimondo, the Papal Legate, arrests his progress, and pronounces the sentence of excommunication against him from the steps of the church. The people fly from Rienzi in terror. Irene stays by her brother in spite of the entreaties of Adriano, who implores her to fly with him and desert her brother. Then follows a scene in the capitol between Irene and her brother in which Rienzi offers up his celebrated prayer. Again Adriano implores Irene to desert her brother. The people are about to set fire to the capitol, but the brave woman proudly declares her determination to die with Rienzi. The rabble appear with stones and torches, led by Baroncelli, one of the former conspirators for freedom. Rienzi attempts to speak to the populace, but their leader will not permit it. They fire the Capitol while Rienzi, clad in armour on the balcony, fortells death and destruction once more for Rome, and as the last of the Romans, curses the degenerate people, and so the opera ends.

WEBER.

CARL MARIA VON WEBER was born at Entin, in the Duchy of Holstein, 18th of December, 1787. When nine years old he commenced taking lessons in music of an excellent master who lived at Hildburghausen, named Hensckel. His next instructor was Michael Haydn, brother of the celebrated composer. In 1798 Weber went to Munich, and there took lessons on the pianoforte of Johann Nepomuk Ralcher, Court organist, and in singing of an Italian master, named Valesi. While under their tuition he composed his first dramatic work, entitled "*Die Macht der Liebe und des Weins*." His next operatic production was "*Das Waldmädchen*," which was played at Munich for the first time in November, 1800, Weber being then but 13 years old. In 1801, he composed his opera "*Peter Schmoll und Seine Nachbarn*," which was performed the same year at Augsburg. At the commencement of the year 1803 Weber met Vogler at Vienna, and studied under him for two years. At the end of that period he accepted the situation of conductor of the orchestra at Breslau. In 1809 he settled in Darmstadt, and, while there, wrote the opera "*Abou Hassan*," which was produced in the spring of 1811. From 1813 to 1816 Weber conducted the music at the German Opera, Prague. On the 25th of October, 1823, his opera "*Euryanthe*" was produced at Venice. In 1824 he received an order to write an opera for Covent Garden Theatre, and for this he selected the subject of *Oberon*. He arrived in London on the 6th of March, 1826, being then in bad health. He was found dead in bed on the 5th of June, 1826, in the house of Sir George Smart, with whom he was staying in London.

DER FREISCHÜTZ.*

THE scene of this opera is laid in Bohemia. There has been a shooting match in front of the village inn at which a peasant, Killian, has carried off the prize the first day, much to the chagrin of the huntsman, Rodolph, who is in love with Agatha, daughter of Kuno, a chief ranger, and to whom Agatha has been promised as his bride, on condition that he wins the prize at the shooting match. It is suggested to Rodolph by Caspar, his brother huntsman, that to ensure his success he should seek the aid of the demon hunter, Zamiel, who, according to the popular legend, will supply him with magic bullets, which infallibly hit the mark, provided he barter his soul in exchange for them. Caspar has already put himself in Zamiel's power, and is bound by the compact to furnish the demon with another victim, or forfeit his own life. Rodolph is persuaded, and accompanies Caspar to the Wolf's Glen, where, amid incantations and horrors, the seven bullets are cast for Rodolph. While on the one hand Rodolph has thus placed himself under the banner of evil, Agatha on the other hand being cast into despondency by an unlucky omen—a picture of her ancestor having fallen from the wall—has consulted a holy hermit, who has given her a sanctified wreath of roses, and warned her of coming danger. Her cousin Ann endeavours to rouse her from her low spirits by singing quaint songs to her. The evil omens continue for her. The box which was to have contained her bridal wreath, on being opened discloses a funeral wreath. She, therefore, wears the roses of the hermit for her bridal wreath, and repairs to the contest of shooting.

Rodolph is successful, and is requested by Ottacar, the prince whose chief ranger Kuno is, to shoot at a white dove flying between the trees. He fires, and misses the dove, for the magic bullets are not altogether infallible.

"Sechse treffen,
Sieben äffen."

* Was written at Dresden during the years 1819 and 1820, and was first performed at the Theatre Königsstadt, Berlin, on the 18th of June, 1821. Weber personally conducted it at Covent Garden Theatre, London, on the 8th of March, 1826, two days after his arrival from the continent.

And Zamiel has not followed Caspar's request that he should guide the seventh to the heart of Agatha, Rodolph's bride. Caspar himself falls from the tree. Zamiel appearing and claiming his victim, Rodolph marries Agatha, and the opera ends with a hymn of thanksgiving and praise, good, in the persons of Agatha and the hermit—having triumphed over the evil Zamiel and Caspar.

The fanciful forebodings and dreams of evil from which Agatha suffers, play a prominent part in the libretto.

OBERON.*

THE first scene discloses the bower of Oberon, the king of the fairies; a chorus of genii and fairies call on one another not to disturb the slumbers of their king. Puck, the Mercury of Fairyland, enters, and orders them all off. He then discloses the fact that Oberon and Titania his Queen have had a domestic squabble and parted company. The subject of this misunderstanding being which of the two is most inconstant, man or woman; and they swore by all the oaths in fairyland to separate until a pair of mortals should be found who would be true to one another "through weal and woe, 'mid flood, and chains, and fire." On the entrance of Oberon, Puck tells him that he has since

* The original libretto of this opera was written in English by J. R. Planché, Esq., Somerset Herald, &c., and has since been translated into the Italian language. The music, as it is now performed, is not as originally composed and arranged by Weber, but rather an adaptation of the old opera, to suit more modern taste. This task was undertaken, and most successfully carried out, by Sir Julius Benedict, Weber's favourite pupil. The opera, in its old form, was first performed at the Italian Opera, Covent Garden, conducted by the composer, on the 12th of April, 1826. On this occasion the rôle of "Reiza" was taken by Mary Anne Paton. She was the daughter of the Master of the Mathematical Seminary in Edinburgh, where she was born in the year 1802. Her first appearance on the stage was in the rôle of "Susanna" in "Figaro" at the Haymarket Theatre, on the 3rd of August, 1822. Two years afterwards she married privately Lord William Lennox, but, the marriage proving unhappy, she obtained a divorce, and married secondly a Mr. Wood, a vocalist. She died on the 20th of July, 1864.

cock-crow been round the world in search of the much-wished-for faithful pair without success, but that he witnessed a strange scene at the Court of Charlemagne. Sir Huon de Bordeaux, Duke of Guienne, having been waylaid by one of the sons of the monarch, slew the prince in self-defence. The judges declared him to be innocent of murder, but the father told him his life would be spared on one condition only:—that he hasten to Bagdad “and slay him who sits on Haroun’s right hand, then kiss, and claim his daughter as bride.” Oberon, on hearing this, orders Puck to cast a sleep on Sir Huon and his esquire, Sherasmin, and bring them to him.

The next scene discloses a flowery bank, on which the knight and esquire are reclining fast asleep. At the command of Oberon a vision is shown of Reiza, daughter of the Caliph, Haroun el Raschid, lying on a couch with a lute in her hand; and she, singing, calls on Sir Huon to arise and come to her rescue. Sir Huon springs up awake, but the vision has gone, and Oberon, introducing himself, assures the knight of his assistance if he but remain true to his ladylove. He then presents him with a horn, which, when blown, will bring help in danger. At a sign from Oberon the clouds open and disclose the river Tigris, with Bagdad in the distance. The fairies then leave Sir Huon and his squire.

We are next conveyed to the harem of Haroun, in Bagdad. Reiza and Fatima, her maid, are discovered in conversation—the former declares she will not marry Prince Babekan, whom her father has selected as her future husband. She further describes how she has had a dream of a handsome young knight who came to her rescue, and ends by saying that sooner than marry Babekan she will take her own life. A loud knocking is heard without, and Fatima, having gone to answer the summons, returns, saying that the handsome young knight of whom Reiza dreamt has truly arrived, and is now at old Namouna’s cottage. The Act ends with the entrance of the night-watch, and all retire to rest.

The first scene in Act II is a saloon in the palace of Haroun. The Caliph is discovered seated on a divan, with Prince Babekan on his right hand. The court is crowded with officials. Haroun announces that the hour prophesied by his astrologers for the marriage of his daughter has arrived. Babekan begs that the nuptial ceremony be at once proceeded with, and Reiza is accordingly sent for. On her entrance a clashing of swords

is heard without, and Sir Huon and Sherasmin enter. Prince Babekan calls on the knight to fight, and in the encounter is slain. As the attendants are about to seize him, Sir Huon blows the horn. Oberon at once appears, and conveys him, Sherasmin, Reiza, and Fatima, her maid, to the port of Ascalon, where a ship is at anchor, bound for Greece, which he orders them to enter. Meantime, Sherasmin the squire and Fatima the maid exchange mutual vows of love. The second Act ends with their departure for the ship.

The third Act opens with a scene among large rocks. Puck calls on the spirits to wreck the vessel in which Sir Huon and his bride have taken their passage.

The next scene discloses a cavern on the sea shore, in which Reiza and her lover have managed to take shelter. Not knowing where they are, Sir Huon, leaving his bride in the cavern alone, goes to seek assistance. During his absence a boat appears on the sea with men aboard, and Reiza calls on them for help. They answer her summons, but, instead of being friends, they prove to be Abdallah, the corsair, and his followers, who carry her off. Sir Huon rushes in to try and save her, but is struck down by one of the men, and left senseless. On this Oberon enters, and, calling Puck, orders him to cast a heavy sleep on the knight, and to guard him for seven days, until the corsair shall have cast anchor in Tunis bay; then to bear Sir Huon thither, and lay him at the door of Ibrahim, the gardener. Puck waves his wand, and a pavilion of flowers rises and encloses the knight. Oberon then gives permission for the spirits, genii, water-nymphs, fairies, &c., to hold high revel on the shore.

The last Act opens with a court in the house of Ibrahim, at Tunis. Fatima and Sherasmin are discovered bewailing their lot of slavery, and the loss of their master and mistress. On their leaving, Puck descends with the still sleeping Sir Huon, and, having ordered him to awake, departs. On the knight coming to his senses Sherasmin again enters, and describes how he and Fatima were seized after the wreck by the corsair and sold in Tunis as slaves. Sir Huon then describes how Reiza was torn from him, when Fatima rushes in declaring that a beautiful lady has just been presented to the Emir Almanzor, whom she is certain is Reiza. Sir Huon then determines to enter the service of Ibrahim, and watch his opportunity to effect the escape of his beloved.

The next scene is an apartment in the harem of the Emir. Sir Huon, having bribed one of the slaves to introduce him to the presence of his ladylove, is seen to enter the room with the attendant. He is almost beside himself with joy at the idea of again meeting his bride, when the curtains in the centre are drawn up, and disclose, instead of Reiza, Roshana, wife of the Emir, much to Sir Huon's disappointment. She declares her love for him, and promises him wealth and position if he will only stab Almanzor, her husband. He refuses with scorn, declaring that he loves another. They are in the midst of this interview when Almanzor and Reiza enter. He orders Sir Huon to be burnt alive for having dared to profane his harem. Reiza begs for his life, declaring herself to be his wife. Almanzor consents, on the condition that she parts from him and becomes his (Almanzor's) property. She spurns the idea with disgust, and both are being led off to execution, when the blast of a horn is heard, and Fatima and Sherasmin come in. Again a louder blast is heard, and the room is filled with clouds, which open and discover Oberon and Titania again joined. Having congratulated the pair on their faithfulness, and thanked them for the service done to them, they are again enveloped in the clouds, which disperse and disclose the Palace of Charlemagne. Sir Huon leads his bride to the foot of the throne, and presents her to the Emperor, declaring he has fulfilled the duty imposed upon him. The opera ends with the chorus singing in honour of Sir Huon and his faithful bride, Reiza.

WAGNER'S OPERAS

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The Theatre at Bayreuth in Which They Are Produced.

It Was Built According to the Composer's Own Ideas.

Bayreuth, where Wagner built his great festival theatre and where he supervised the production of the works of his mature genius, is a quaint, rustic little town in Bavaria, on the left bank of the Red Main, says the *New York Mail and Express*. There are three palaces in the town. The Hermitage palace is a fanciful building, where Frederick the Great and his sister, the Margravine of Bayreuth, resided. An excellent bronze statue of Jean Paul Richter, the philosopher, who died and was buried in Bayreuth in 1825, is in the gymnasiumplatz, and an inscription in gold letters marks his house. It is a picturesque little town, with a population of about 20,000. The quietness of the place was probably its chief attraction for Wagner, and it was here that he saw the completion of his life's work. He had long been possessed of a desire to have an opera-house of his own, where his works could be produced under his personal direction. He wished to have the four operas comprising the great Nibelungen Tetralogy rendered to his own satisfaction, and he would not entertain the idea of having them produced anywhere but in an opera-house of his own.

The corner-stone of Wagner's Opera House was laid in 1872 and was completed in 1876, when the first festival took place. The theatre occupies a hilly site within easy walking distance of the heart of the town. It is built of brick, and the architecture is severely plain. The interior is remarkable for its simplicity. It will accommodate about one thousand four hundred persons. There is no attempt at ornamentation, and this is in accordance with Wagner's idea that there should be nothing in a theatre to distract attention from what is taking place on the stage.

There are no proscenium boxes, no visible footlights or orchestra, no prompter's hood. Those who are accustomed only to the distracting architectural accessories of an ordinary theatre can hardly conceive, perhaps, how greatly the effect of any scene is enhanced by its thus being, so to speak, the only thing in sight. And in a house so built no one can do aught but look and listen to what is on the boards. It is not a show place for the audience, but a darkened hall, whither the audience comes for the sake of the opera alone.

The musicians sit in a kind of "moat" which runs across the theatre between the stage and the audience, and they are entirely hidden from view. This concealment of the orchestra is an equally fortunate arrangement. The power of the music is increased by its thus seeming the work of invisible agents, instead of piping, puffing gentlemen in non-dramatic garb. And the whole volume of sound comes to the ear with far more unity and precision of effect.

The stage is 100 feet wide by 103 feet in depth. Back of this is another stage, fifty feet in length, that is used only on extraordinary occasions. The scenic arrangements, as is necessary in the production of Wagner's operas, are probably the finest in the world. Many novel effects are introduced. For instance, in "Parsifal," the old knight and the boy Parsifal appear to be walking through a deep forest to the castle of Monsiviat. But in reality it is the scenery that is moving past them, sometimes entirely hiding them from view, and they are finally seen to emerge from the wood and the grand hall of the castle, although they have not once left the stage. This shifting is marvelously well done and the illusion is complete.

Lovers of music from all over the world assemble at Bayreuth during the summer to hear Wagner's operas. The price of seats is twenty marks, or five dollars each, regardless of location, so those who apply first get the best seats. There are usually fourteen or sixteen performances, spreading over a period of four or five weeks. The performance begins at 4:30 in the afternoon and continues until 10:30, with two intermissions of an hour each, during which the audience leaves the house and walks around the spacious gardens or dines at the near-by restaurant. When the tetralogy is given, the performance lasts for four days, one opera each night.

"Die Walkure."

The important production of Wagner's great opera "Die Walkure" has been postponed till Tuesday night, and it will then be given at the Grand Opera-house. The experience at the Baldwin Theater has been that, while the patronage on Wagner nights has been beyond the capacity of the theater, the expense is so great that there is little profit. As there has been ample demand to fill the Grand Opera-house, and "Die Walkure" will sound better and be more enjoyable in the larger building, the management has decided to close the Baldwin Theater for the week and play the remainder of Juch's engagement at the Grand. There is more involved in the success of "Die Walkure" than the mere profit to the managers and the satisfaction to the audiences. It was from the remarkable patronage given to English opera with Emma Abbott on her first visit that Mapleson was induced to bring out Patti and Gerster and his enormous company. There is but one attraction now in America which can make a sensation in San Francisco. It is the Metropolitan Opera-house's German company. It is a great risk for anybody to take to bring it here, but there is no reason why we should not have it. It is the only organization that can produce Wagner, and there is no doubt that for such productions the public here are just as willing to pay as they were to pay for Patti. It is not only Wagner. The German company has a large repertory of works never heard out here, such as "The Queen of Sheba" and the new grand operas just making sensations in New York. There is a prospect of \$150,000 to \$175,000 for a season of twenty-five performance if given with all the effect of the metropolitan productions. The presentation of Wagner by the Juch company is amply worth the money charged, and in acknowledging the desire for the music, not only of Wagner, but of other composers whose works are in the German repertory, we are likely to make it a serious proposition to bring the New York artists out.

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The Plot to the Opera — "Die Walküre" —

"Die Walkure" is an opera which deals with the gods. The first act shows the meeting of Siegmund and Sieglinde, both children of Wotan by a mortal. Sieglinde is the wife of Hunding, in whose dwelling, which is of Wagnerian architecture, Siegmund seeks a shelter. She has been forced to marry him, and she begs Siegmund to take her away from him. Wotan has left a magic sword sunk up to the hilt in a tree, which is to be for the men who can withdraw it. Siegmund draws it, and Sieglinde and he escape. In the second act Fricka, the goddess, upbraids Wotan with having created and encouraged Siegmund and Sieglinde in this outrage on the marriage vow. Wotan defends himself by claiming that it was necessary to create a mortal who could do what the gods could not do, win back from the giants Alberich's ring. He has foretold to Siegmund that at his direst need he should find the sword which would render him invincible. But at length he yields to Fricka and promises to withdraw the magic power. Brunnhilde, one of the nine Walkyrie, the favorite daughter of Wotan, is bidden not to shield Siegmund in the fight with Hunding, Sieglinde's husband. She disobeys the mandate and is shielding him, when Wotan in rage appears and Siegmund is slain. Brunnhilde takes Sieglinde and flies. The third act brings in the wild Walkyrie ride, and is devoted to Wotan's punishment of Brunnhilde, the opera closing with Brunnhilde's falling into a deep sleep. Wotan first declares that whoever wakes her shall have her for his wife, but on her pleading, he surrounds the rock on which she lies with flames, so that only a worthy hero may be able to reach her. This story is told with all its mythological accompaniment. Storms, clouds, steeds in the air and the accessories of the mythical gods play a large part. It will be most creditable in the production if it only fairly presents the wonderful effects. The company will have work to do in "Die Walkure," and so will the orchestra, which will be much augmented. "Die Walkure" will be given Tuesday and Wednesday.

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